

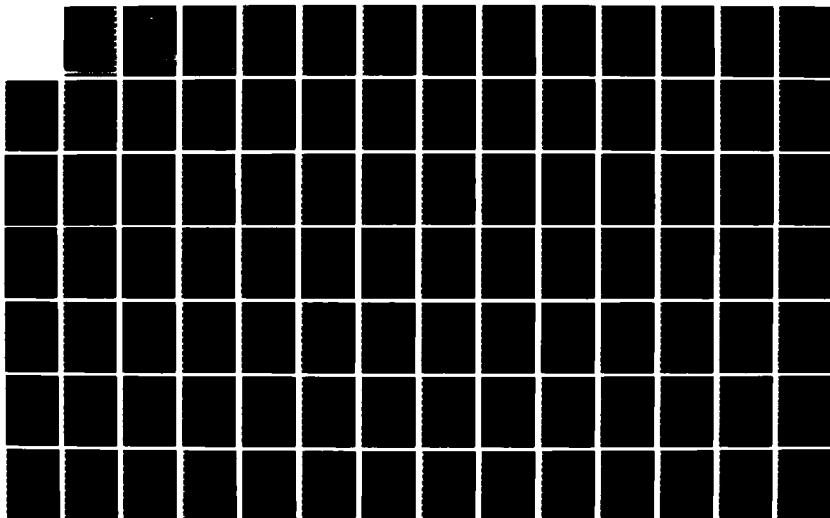
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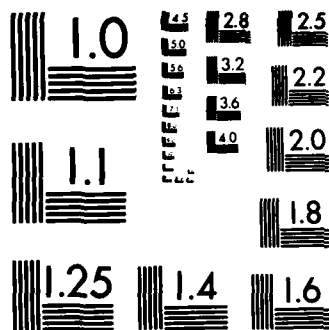
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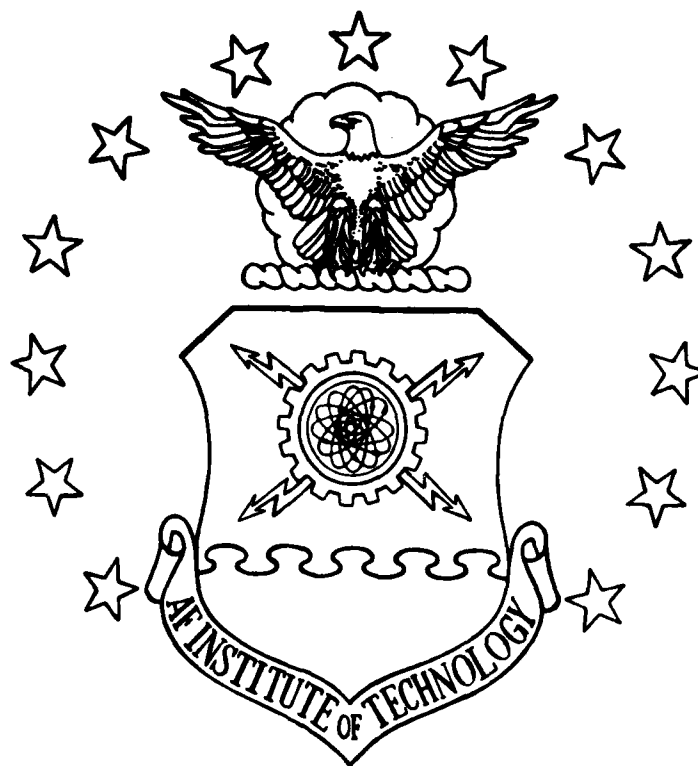
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SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA:  
ASSESSMENT OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN  
EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, AND HONDURAS

THESIS

Louis M. Johnson, Jr.  
Captain, USAF

AFIT/GLM/LSY/86S-35

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SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA:  
ASSESSMENT OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN  
EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, AND HONDURAS

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Systems and  
Logistics of the Air Force Institute of Technology

Air University

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Logistics Management

Louis M. Johnson, Jr., B.S., M.S.

Captain, USAF

**SEPTEMBER**

~~March~~ 1986

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## Preface

The purpose of this report was to examine U.S. involvement in the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and gauge the effectiveness of the security assistance which has supported U.S. foreign policy in the area.

A background analysis developed a portrayal of the area from a broad perspective and was followed by an in-depth examination of foreign influence in the region. A subjective analysis based on several viewpoints discussed the issue of security assistance in each country and led to the results of this research, which are answered in the final chapter.

I specifically thank my advisor, Dr. Richard Taliaferro, for his interest and assistance in my thesis. I also thank my father, who served as an unofficial reader, and my wife Jackie and our three children who put up with my absences from home on many a night.

Louis M. Johnson, Jr.

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## Abstract

This thesis examined U.S. involvement in the northern Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras by gauging the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy as a specific result of security assistance.

A background analysis developed a portrayal of the area from a broad perspective and was followed by an in-depth examination of foreign influence in the region. A subjective analysis based on several prominent viewpoints discussed the issue of security assistance in each country.

This effort indicates there have been varying degrees of success when the U.S. has used security assistance to meet its foreign policy objectives in Central America. Inconsistent U.S. assistance in the 1970s led to the requirement for relatively massive aid during the years of the Reagan administration. The need for consistency in foreign policy and security assistance in this vital area of U.S. concern is the conclusion of this thesis.



## I. Introduction

This chapter introduces this thesis, titled "Security Assistance to Central America: Assessment of U.S. Involvement in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras." Contained within is an overview of the topic, problem statement and approach, research objectives and investigative questions, synopsis of methodology, literature review, definition of terms used within, a general background of U.S. security assistance, and a plan of presentation for the remaining chapters.

### Overview

Since the Federation of Central American States declared independence from Spain and Mexico in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine has guided U.S. foreign policy in Central America (56:15). With the origin of the profitable fruit trade in 1899, U.S. interest in the area extended beyond hemispheric defense because of the region's significant commercial value. Since World War II, the United States has used security assistance to advance its influence in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in northern Central America and Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama in southern Central America. This assistance has helped these countries

protect themselves from internal and external threats, and has fostered a relative balance of power in the region as well as maintaining U.S. influence. However, this same assistance has not resulted in making Central America the loyal, democratic "U.S. backyard" as was intended.

Significant problems plague the six nations of Central America. Foremost is a history of chaotic self-government; El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have constitutions less than 20 years old and only recently have elections replaced military rule. Agriculture prevails and thwarts the growth of industry. Internal conflict (i.e., the current Civil War in El Salvador), overpopulation and uncontrolled growth, external threats (Marxist and Soviet-supported Nicaragua), racial disputes, and a harsh climate add to the regional dilemma. U.S. aid and guidance have had little lasting effect on any of these problems, as evidenced by the continuing turmoil in the area.

Nevertheless, the U.S. investment in this unstable area is significant and growing. To what degree the United States has met its foreign policy goals in this area and can expect satisfactory future results through security assistance is the subject of this research. The continuous strife, seemingly never-ending chaos, and overwhelming poverty prompt such questions as "Is this area worth the investment?", "Can we expect these countries to support the U.S position in times of crisis?", and "Doesn't history tell

us there is no lasting solution for this region's myriad of problems?" Obviously, the present administration feels there is a need for security assistance, as have many previous administrations. Research is therefore necessary to determine exactly what success security assistance has brought U.S. foreign policy in the past, and what success continued assistance will bring.

#### Statement of Problem

This thesis examined U.S. involvement in northern Central America from independence until the present with the goal of accurately and objectively gauging the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy as a specific result of security assistance.

#### An Approach to the Problem

In order to objectively attack this problem, stated foreign policy and State Department goals were comparatively measured against interpretation of actual events of the past five years and forecasts of the future.

First, an important background analysis developed an understanding of many aspects unique to the region and gave insight to the reasons for the growth of communism, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism in the area since 1980. Second, in-depth examination of foreign influence in the region, with specific emphasis on the United States,

complemented the regional analysis. Third, a subjective analysis from several viewpoints on the effectiveness of security assistance in developing U.S. influence and settling regional problems insured an objective approach and sound foundation for solution of the research problem. Finally, this research lead to a discussion and comparative measurement of the success of U.S. involvement in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras since 1980 and answered three important investigative questions.

#### Research Objectives

The objective of this research is clear: gauge the effectiveness of U.S. security assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras through comparative measurement and determine if future assistance is a worthwhile investment. In the FY 1985 Congressional Presentation Document, the Reagan Administration outlined the importance of this region:

Our key objectives in this neighboring region are democracy, peace and development. The achievement of these objectives is threatened by a powerful Soviet/Cuban/Nicaraguan drive to expand their power and influence, as well as the effects of the worst economic recession the area has experienced since the 1930's. The National Bipartisan Commission on Central America has concluded that 'Central America is both vital and vulnerable, and that whatever other crises may arise to claim the nation's attention the United States cannot afford to turn away from that threatened region (18:1-35).

With this view in mind, it thus became a secondary,

and most necessary objective, to gather viewpoints outside the U.S. government in order to produce a more objective thesis. These objectives were met, as explained in the forthcoming methodology, and resolved by answering the following investigative questions.

### Investigative Questions

Three questions, when answered, resolved the specific problem of effectiveness of U.S. security assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras:

1. What are the foreign policy objectives which have governed U.S. security assistance to the region?
2. How effective has U.S. assistance been when measured against foreign policy objectives?
3. What is the future of U.S. influence in the region with continued security assistance?

### Methodology

Two distinct steps solved the specific problem and answered investigative questions. Each step involved historical research and personal interviews.

1. Definition of current and historical U.S. foreign policy goals in the northern Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras:

- a. Document research at the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM) Library.

b. Personal interviews from the following agencies:

- Latin American Studies Director, DISAM
- Latin American Area Director, International Logistics Center (ILC)

2. Comparison of events since World War II, and the past five years in particular, in Central America from several viewpoints with stated U.S. foreign policy goals:

a. Document research at the DISAM Library, the University of Louisville, and Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

b. Personal interviews from the following agencies or individuals:

- DISAM
- International Logistics Center
- Directors of Latin American Studies, in the Geography, History, and Political Science Departments, University of Louisville

Step one answered investigative question one and formed the basis for comparison for question two. Step two compiled a wide variety of fact and opinion which was objectively and comparatively measured against stated security assistance objectives. Step two was also a subjective study of the future based on historical research and personal interviews. This study supported a forecast

and analysis of investigative question three.

A summary, conclusion, and recommendation formed a personal, educated synopsis and opinion concerning the research problem.

### Scope and Limitations

The subject of effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy through security assistance is both a political and national defense issue. Events beyond the control of the State Department and DOD can dictate foreign policy more than any one study of an area, its problems, and solutions. While defense considerations and policies may change slowly over time, political events may not. An administration and Congress with less regard for Central American issues than previous administrations and Congresses could immediately change emphasis and priorities for security assistance.

Thus, this thesis was written with the understanding that political changes and unforeseen world events could alter the issue of security assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras completely. Nevertheless, a study of the effectiveness of past U.S. assistance and educated opinions of its worth make this thesis valuable for anyone concerned with the future of Central American affairs. It is broad in that it covers many aspects of the region (i.e., geography, economy, religion, etc.) in a general manner. It is specific in that it highlights security assistance in

detail. It is limited because it uses only unclassified sources and narrows coverage of Central America to three countries, both for good reason.

An unclassified study will reach the greatest audience, which is the intention of this thesis. Also, there is a wealth of unclassified sources for review on the area and the subject in comparison to very few classified reports.

The northern Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were selected for study for several reasons, as described below.

1. Since pre-Spanish colonial times, these three countries have been similar in many respects. Interaction among each other has been great, as evidenced by numerous conflicts, common borders, language, religions, economies, and peoples. Southern Central America, for instance, has not been nearly as influenced by Indian culture as these three countries have been.

2. U.S. inclination to effectively influence the course of events in these three countries has never been long-lasting, as will be described in the historical analysis. As opposed to the U.S.-backed Somoza regime in Nicaragua, good relations with Costa Rica, and the presence of the Canal and U.S. military in Panama, northern Central America has only experienced U.S. presence for short periods of time, usually crisis. Only since 1980 has U.S. influence in El Salvador and Honduras been so great as to actually



determine the future of these countries. The U.S. has never been totally accepted as a 'big brother' in Guatemala, and certainly is not today.

3. A similar study was accomplished by a fellow Air Force Institute of Technology student, Captain Steven Bishop, titled "The History of Security Assistance to Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica." When read along with this thesis, these studies present a complete picture of U.S. security assistance and involvement in all of Central America.

4. The neighboring countries of Mexico and Belize were not selected for study. Mexico is not considered part of Central America by any source and would be a complete study in itself. Belize (formerly British Honduras) shares many cultural and geographical traits with the countries of northern Central America, but because of strong British influence throughout its history, has received very little U.S. security assistance. Its ties with the United Kingdom remain strong for many reasons, not the least of which is protection from Guatemala, and are not likely to change.

#### Literature Review

A literature search conducted by the Air Force Institute of Technology School of Systems and Logistics (AFIT/LS) Library through the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) revealed no studies done specifically on

security assistance to any Central American country, with the exception of Soviet assistance to Nicaragua. The late Dr. Leslie P. Norton, International Logistics instructor at AFIT/LS, stated in August 1985 that he knew of no such work and looked forward to the results of such research.

However, numerous studies have been done on the area in general, security assistance in general, and security assistance to other countries of the world. In addition, sources for support material were numerous, as described later in this section.

DTIC reports reviewed for background data were R. Nicholson's "Economic Sabotage as a Tool of Insurgency - The Case of El Salvador," in which he evaluates the insurgency in El Salvador and its economic impact; Hector Rene Fonseca's "Honduras: Will the Revolution Come?," in which he concludes revolution will most likely not come from within, but from its three neighbors; E. Gonzalez', B. Jenkins', D. Ronfeldt's and C. Sereseres' "U.S. Policy for Central America: A Briefing," a revised version of a briefing given in October 1983 to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by Dr. Henry Kissinger; E. Williams' "Mexico's Central American Policy: Apologies, Motivations, and Principles," a discussion of Mexican foreign policy in Central America and its relative ineffectiveness; and A. Maldonado's "The Arms Transfer Issue: A Latin American Perspective", in which he discusses

the net effect of U.S. security assistance policies as a result of criticism at home and abroad.

Also reviewed through the DTIC system were the following security assistance reports: "Economic Considerations of U.S. Foreign Military Sales", by William J. Haugen, National War College, April 1983; "The Third World Arms Market in the 1980's: Implications for U.S. Policy", by Eugene Braiden Rex, U.S. Naval Academy, June 1981; and "The Changing Scene: Foreign Military Sales and Technology Transfer", by the Seventh Annual Executive Seminar on International Security Affairs, Barry S. Shillito, Chairman, March 1983.

There were numerous studies on security assistance programs to other countries both in DTIC and the AFIT/LS Library, which were reviewed primarily for structure and methodology. M. Hernaez' "A Study of Venezuela's Internal and External Threat and the United States Security Assistance Program in the Build-Up and Modernization of Her Forces" was the most similar to this thesis in geographical proximity, but most different because of the size, prosperity, and relative success of Venezuela's democracy in comparison to northern Central America.

Lieutenant Colonel Manuel F. Vega, Director of Americas Programs, International Logistics Center, indicated no record of a historical report of the security assistance program to El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras existed. The

information within the center is principally of a contractual, quantitative nature. Copies of current programs and contractual matters were provided for security assistance programs to each country, mostly on Department of Defense Letters of Offer and Acceptance (DD Form 1513).

The DISAM Library proved to be the most valuable source of literature. Major works and periodicals on each country and the area were plentiful. State Department, Department of Defense, and Congressional Records not readily available in many libraries were extremely valuable and are used as sources throughout this report. Some of the most valuable of these reports were the State Department "Background Notes" on each country, the "Congressional Presentation Document", and the Defense Department's 'Country Study' handbooks. Reports and works from various authors and corporations not associated with the U.S. government were equally numerous and valuable. These works include such references as Armed Forces of Latin America, the Perth Corporation's Defense & Foreign Affairs Handbook 1985, the World Bank's World Tables: Third Edition, Vol I, and International Marketing Data and Statistics 1985. Literature found at DISAM forms the majority of the sources used for the Background and Foreign Influence chapters.

One of the most valuable and applicable sources found at DISAM was the Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by Dr. Henry A.

Kissinger, and published in March 1984. The Commission was formed to "study the nature of United States interests in the Central American region and the threats now posed to those interests" (60:6). Among other tasks, the Commission would use its findings to "provide advice on means of building a national consensus on a comprehensive United States policy for the region" (60:6). The Commission fielded appearances from experts from August 10 until December 12, 1983, including former Presidents Jimmy Carter, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford; Secretaries Vance, Haig, Rogers, and Rusk; several ambassadors; scores of academicians, corporations, religious leaders, and special interest groups; and many international experts of various backgrounds. In addition, the countries of Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua sent hundreds of representatives to include the presidents, foreign ministers, and labor leaders of each country. Meetings were also held in Mexico City and Caracas, Venezuela. The actual report and its appendix, together numbering 1000 pages of manuscript, is as complete a synopsis of current Central American affairs as can be found. Much of the report deals with the economy and human rights, but is of extreme value to this thesis.

To further the search for material related to this topic, the Wright State University Library in Dayton, Ohio and the University of Louisville, Kentucky were visited on

numerous occasions. The Wright State Library had several works on Latin America, such as John Crow's The Epic of Latin America, which is an in-depth and well-written complete history. The massive library at the University of Louisville, the oldest (1798) and largest in Kentucky, proved extremely valuable for the most current literature on the subject. Its reference section was used extensively for maps, diagrams, figures and tables cited throughout this report.

Because of the current national debate on U.S. policy towards Central America, sources were easier to find than would have been the case ten years ago. For this reason, only the most recent articles on particular subject areas are chosen. Given the ever-changing nature of the Central American political climate, this proved a luxury. Magazine articles, in particular, dealt specifically with U.S. foreign policy and security assistance issues. The only report not found was one that discussed security assistance throughout history to each country of Central America, as is done in this thesis for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

#### Definition of Security Assistance Terms

Since the subject of security assistance is so integral to this thesis, definition of its most common terms is necessary. The terms selected for definition are not all-

inclusive, for the field of security assistance is burdened with hundreds of terms and acronyms. Those defined in this section are the most commonly used and referenced in this report.

Security Assistance, as defined in the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, is:

Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense related services, by grant, credit or cash sales, in furtherance of national policies and objectives (18:2-4).

The seven components which make up U.S. security assistance, under the guidance of the administration and State Department, are divided among the Department of Defense (four) and the State Department (three) in terms of responsibility.

The Department of Defense (DOD) manages:

1. The Military Assistance Program (MAP) - The original military aid program, used more during the 1950s and 1960s than today, which provided "defense articles and related services, other than training, ... to eligible governments on a grant basis" (18:2-11).

2. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program - "by which training is provided in the United States and, in some cases, in overseas U.S. military facilities to selected foreign military and related civilian personnel on a grant basis" (18:2-12). El Salvador and

Honduras receive large amounts of IMET benefits at present, as will be discussed later in the report.

3. The Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Financing Program - "by which credits and loan repayment guarantees are provided to enable eligible foreign governments to purchase defense articles, services, and training" (13:2-13). Currently, El Salvador receives more under the FMS program than any country in Latin America, including such powers as Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela (17:4-6).

4. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Foreign Military Construction Sales Program - "a program through which eligible foreign governments purchase defense articles, services, and training from the United States Government" (13:2-14). Saudi Arabia has been the top customer in recent years, followed by Israel (18:2-15).

The Department of State (DOS) manages:

1. The Economic Support Fund (ESF) - administered by the Agency for International Development (AID), this program "was established to promote economic or political stability in areas where the United States has special political and security interests and has determined that economic assistance can be useful in helping to secure peace or to avert major economic or political crises" (18:2-12). Once again, El Salvador is the top recipient in Latin America, followed closely by Honduras (15:363-377).



2. Peacekeeping Operations (PKO):

was established to provide for that portion of Security Assistance devoted to programs such as the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), the US contribution to the United Nations Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and other programs designed specifically for peacekeeping operations. The proposed FY 1985 PKO program totals \$49 million (18:2-13).

3. Commercial Sales Program - "Licensed under the AECA...a sale made by U.S. industry directly to a foreign buyer...not administered by DOD...licensed by the Office of Munitions and Control, Department of State" (18:2-16).

Background of U.S. Security Assistance

The U.S. security assistance program can be traced to the Monroe Doctrine, "established for the protection of the Americas from European powers in 1823 by President James Monroe" (18:1-12). In the First World War, the U.S. carried on a substantial arms trade with both Britain and Germany, before entering the war, and subsequently returned to isolationism. With the coming of World War II, the signing of the "Lend-Lease Act" once again committed the U.S. to an arms export program. However, most feel the true beginnings of security assistance started with the so-called "Truman Doctrine" of 1947, in which President Harry S. Truman requested \$400 million aid to Greece and Turkey in their battle with Communist guerrilla insurgency:

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure (18:1-16).

In 1948, the U.S. adopted the European Recovery Plan (ERP), subsequently known as the "Marshall Plan", whereby "Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed a massive program of American aid to help rebuild the shattered economies of Europe" (18:1-18). The Cold War with the Soviet Union, the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Korean War in 1950 resulted in President Eisenhower's strengthening of the security assistance concept. The Mutual Security Act of 1951 and its amendment in 1954 were key elements in the development of the "Eisenhower Doctrine" in 1957, in which the U.S. had the "right to employ force, if necessary, to assist any such nation or group of nations requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism" (18:1-21).

The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 is the authority for MAP, IMET, ESF, and PKO, as well as other programs. As brought out later in this report, assistance rendered under FAA during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations swelled to Latin American countries with the Cuban threat and more significantly, to South Vietnam, with the threat from the north. The use of U.S. military personnel was included in this assistance, and as a result of the prolonged conflict in Indochina, came under intense public criticism.

The "Nixon Doctrine", previously known as the Guam Doctrine of 1969, refines the definition of security assistance. "The central thesis of the doctrine is that, although the United States will participate in the development of security for friends and allies, the major effort must be made by the governments and peoples of these states" (18:1-24).

The Arms Export and Control Act (AECA) of 1976, formally the Foreign Military Sales Act of 1968 (FMSA), became the chief authorization for the management of security assistance. The AECA "in addition to containing several restrictions on the way in which FMS and commercial sales are conducted, also contains the fiscal year(s) dollar authorization (in terms of an aggregate ceiling) for the FMS financing program.

Presidents Ford and Carter, caught in the backlash of public disgust with the Vietnam War and Watergate, began to scrutinize the arms transfer issue. Human rights became the byword of the Carter Administration, ultimately ending assistance programs to many countries, to include Guatemala in 1977. This policy was short-lived, however, as concern with the Persian Gulf and the Iranian dilemma prompted the "Carter Doctrine" of 1980. Similar to the Truman Doctrine, President Carter's policy stated "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an

assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. And such assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force" (18:1-28).

The Reagan Administration refined and supported security assistance as an integral part of U.S. foreign policy. William Schneider, Jr., Undersecretary of State for Security Assistance stated in 1983:

We consider arms transfers to be an instrument of U.S. policy, not an exceptional instrument as our predecessors tried but in fact failed to establish nor as a largely commercial activity as is the case with a number of other nations...arms transfers should be and are an integral part of our security relationships with friendly countries who seek to deter and defend against neighbors who are, most likely, armed by the Soviets or other East Bloc countries (18:1-34).

Secretary of State George F. Shultz confirms our present stance, with this statement in 1983:

Our security and economic assistance programs are essential instruments of our foreign policy and are directly linked to the national security and economic well-being of the United States. They must be seen in the context of our priority effort to reestablish the fact and the perception among our friends and allies that we are a reliable partner -- that we have the capacity and will to build international peace, foster economic growth, and sustain mutual security (18:1-1).

It is a direct result of this policy that the Central American countries of El Salvador and Honduras have received relatively massive security assistance since 1980. The effectiveness and reliability of this assistance will be discussed at length in this thesis.

## Plan of Presentation

Chapter I introduced this thesis, its general issue, and the specific problem of gauging the effectiveness and future of U.S. security assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. An objective approach to a current problem which will result in the answering of three investigative questions was followed by a section outlining the scope and limitations of this report. Two distinct steps, each entailing document research and personal interviews, form the methodology which answers the three investigative questions in the final chapter. Several terms of security assistance are defined, followed by a short review of the United States authority and policy for security assistance since 1947. This plan of presentation closes the first chapter.

Chapter II is a regional background of northern Central America. A geographical and historical analysis describe the land and culture that characterize El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. An economic analysis shows the hardship and debt-ridden status of these nations, followed by individual accounts of each country's political status as of publication and current military makeup.

Chapter III shows the important effect several powerful countries have had on these three nations for the past two or more centuries. Although some think of the area in terms of the superpowers, a closer look will reveal a truly

international emphasis upon these countries, brought about by decades of external influence.

Chapters IV, V, and VI address the current political considerations, economic status, and security assistance rendered each country. A viewpoints section is the highlight of each chapter, including opinions from several sources, as mentioned in the methodology section. These chapters discuss current internal and external threats, immediate economic problems and plans for solution, and viewpoints resulting from candid interviews on a "hot" topic.

Chapter VII summarizes the findings of this report, answers the research questions, concludes the research, and makes recommendations for the future. The U.S. has considered Central American affairs of prime importance for many years and even more so in the recent past. Soviet advances in Nicaragua promise to make the area one of conflict for years to come. U.S. security assistance will not stop, short of outright involvement, and for this reason, must continue in a consistent manner. Since the Central American scene changes rapidly, as has been its history, future research on a solution to the Central American crisis needs to be accomplished. If a solution is ever reached which favors U.S. national interests and security assistance is a part of that solution, then further research will be required for conducting that assistance

program on the same level as our other allies. This thesis contains enough pertinent information on the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to be a valuable source for such continuing research.

## II. Regional Background

This chapter is a synopsis of the major characteristics which distinguish the contiguous countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The general areas chosen as the most representative of the region are geography, history, the economy, politics, and the military. Sources were selected for this chapter because they represented the wide variety of literature in the most impartial and unbiased manner; there are many instances where numerous opinions and conflicting data can be found on the same Central American topic. Nevertheless, the reader will get an up-to-date, basic summary of a variety of characteristics that make northern Central Americans what they are today.

### Geographical Analysis

The varied and sometimes harsh geographical features of northern Central America have a profound effect upon the everyday lives of the peoples in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Further, these features have shaped their history, impeded their progress, and loom as obstacles yet to be conquered. This section examines the area by analysing both regional and cultural geographical facts, followed by a look at the demographics which make this



region unique and volatile.

Regional Geography. The three countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are located in the northern half of Central America along with the small country of Belize, which borders Guatemala in the northeast. Located between 13 and 16 degrees latitude and 83 and 92 degrees longitude, these countries are bordered to the north by Mexico (Guatemala), to the west by the Pacific Ocean (El Salvador, Guatemala), to the south by Nicaragua (Honduras), and to the east by the Caribbean Sea (Honduras) and the Gulf of Honduras (Guatemala). Inner boundaries are formed by a line connecting the Paz River and Lago (lake) de Guija (El Salvador-Guatemala), a line to the south of the Motagua River and along the ridge of the Sierra de Merendon mountains (Honduras-Guatemala), and a line along several rivers in the Honduran highlands, most notably Lempa, Torola, and Goascoran (El Salvador-Honduras) (45:226-227).

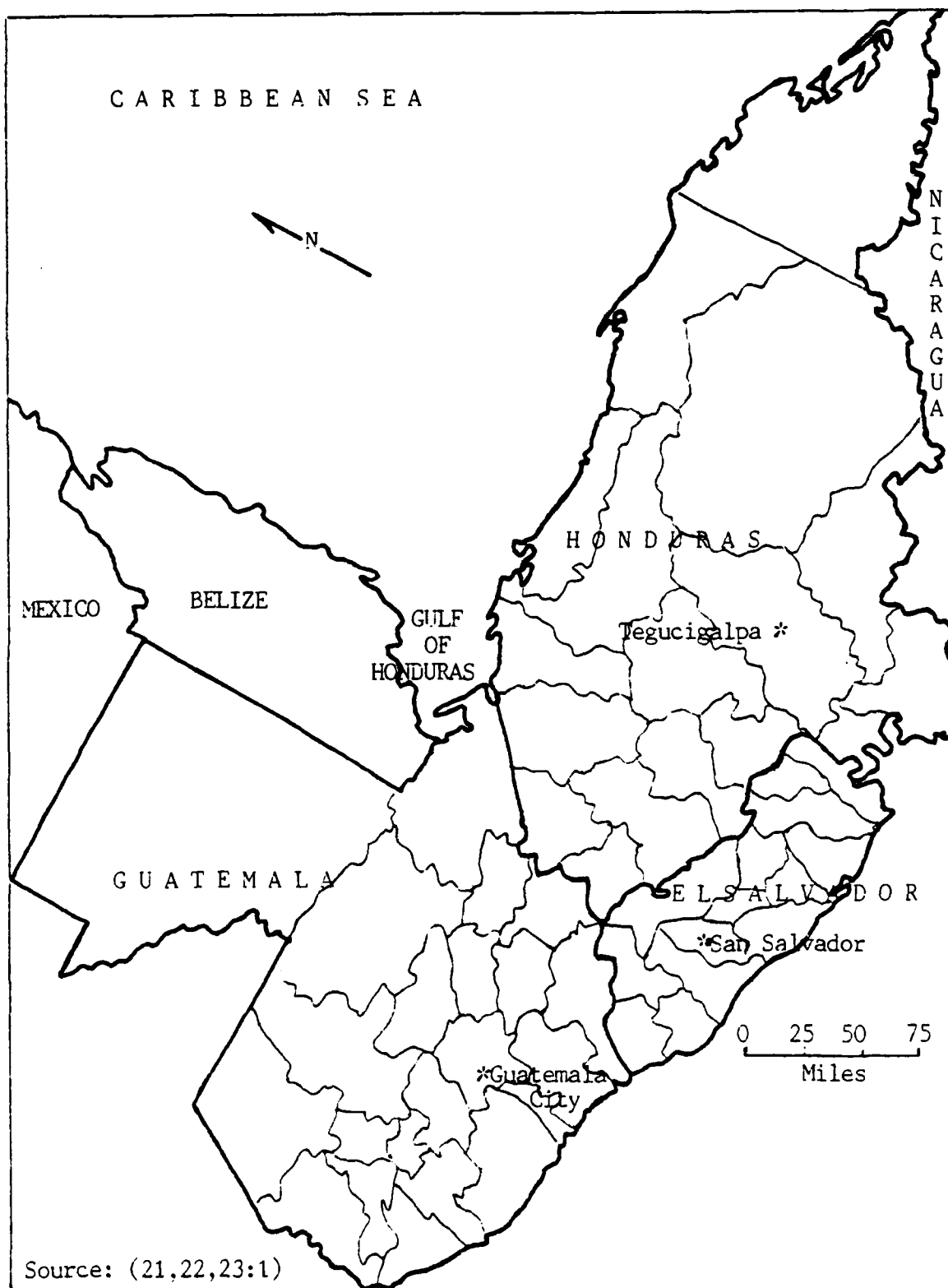
Each country's largest city is its capital, all are located inland amongst the highlands, and each contain elements of modern lifestyle. El Salvador's capitol is San Salvador, Guatemala's is Guatemala (City), and Honduras Tegucigalpa. The major cities of El Salvador are San Salvador (population 380,000), Santa Ana (172,300), and San Miguel (132,000); Guatemala's are Guatemala City (800,000), Quezaltenango (65,733), and Puerto Barrios (31,000); Honduras' are Tegucigalpa (317,000), San Pedro Sula

(160,000), and La Ceiba (50,000) (14:191-281).

Each country is administratively divided into 'departments', similar to states or provinces, with an accompanying capital city (Figure 2-1). Most departments' boundaries are based upon geographical features, such as Peten in Guatemala, or ancient Mayan Indian traditional tribal areas.

The northern half of the Central American isthmus is characterized by an alpine-like mountain system surrounded by humid landform areas and unmanageable rain forests (47:126). The southern extension of the Sierra Madre mountain chain in southern Mexico, the highlands of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras make up over 60% of the region's total land. Perhaps the most significant chain of mountains in the area is the Sierra de Merendon, forming the boundary between Guatemala and Honduras (47:126). However, the highlands dictate so many aspects of each country's economic, cultural, and military policies that it is difficult to term any one chain more significant than the other. In particular, nearly 80% of Honduras total national area is mountainous, peaking at almost 10,000 ft. (61:56). The highest points are volcanic, as is the case of Guatemala's Tajumulco (13,816 ft.), and reflect the enormous activity that takes place below sea level in the area. "Guatemala is situated in an exceptionally seismic zone in which five major tectonic plates meet: American, Carribbean,

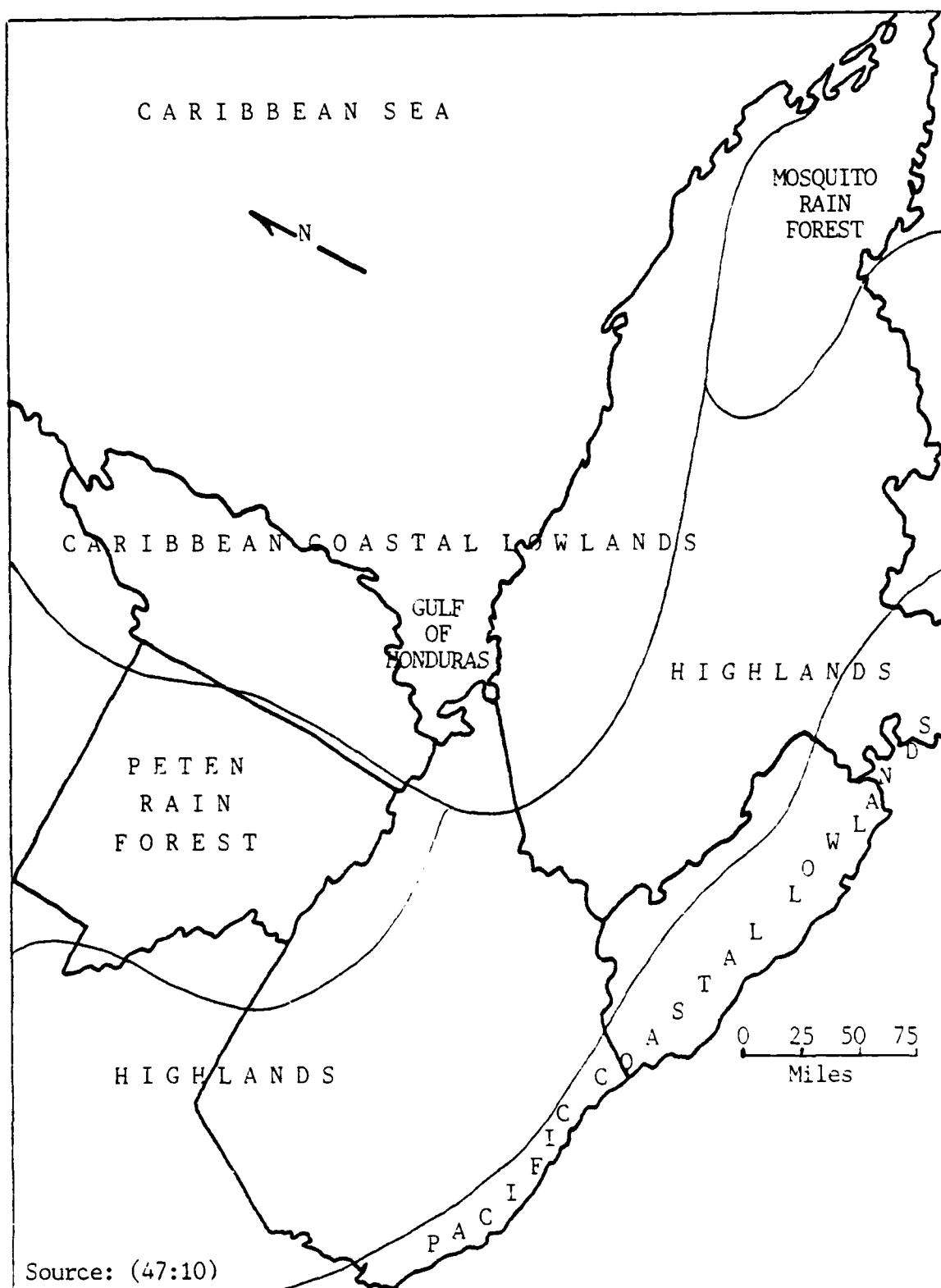
FIGURE 2-1. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF EL SALVADOR,  
GUATEMALA, AND HONDURAS



Cocos, Nazca, and Pacific" (60:46). Needless to say, occurrences of earthquakes have been numerous in the area, the most recent in 1976 affected over 8 percent of the national territory of Guatemala (60:46).

As depicted by the regional map (Figure 2-2), the highlands are surrounded by tropical, more reasonably tempered areas to the west (Pacific coastal lowlands) and tropical rain forests to the east (Caribbean coastal lowlands). Since the Pacific lowlands are more temperate in climate than the Caribbean rain forests, these areas have historically been more agriculturally productive and much more suitable for industry. While temperatures in both regions average 70-90 degrees year-round (47:12-13), the tropical rain forest receives twice as much rain (over 80 inches per year) and thus creates the humid, dense vegetation so harsh to human exploitation. Eastern Honduras and the northeastern region of Guatemala contain large areas of tropical rain forest; only in recent times have these countries been able to settle the coastal areas with any success. The Pacific coastal lowlands makeup about one-third of El Salvador's land and the entire western boundary of Guatemala. The rich volcanic soil of the foothills make this agricultural area the most productive in the region, but the shallow waters of Guatemala's coastline and intercoastal river system thwart the agricultural industry in the West (60:45).

FIGURE 2-2. REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA



The other two regions which characterize the variety in the area of northern Central America are the Mosquitia coastal lowlands and the Peten limestone plateau of northern Guatemala. The 'Mosquito Coast' of southeastern Honduras and northeastern Nicaragua is the most extensive and least developed of the Caribbean lowlands. "This region is characterized by an extensive savannah stretching along the eastern ranges to the Caribbean coastline where it is characterized by swamps and mangrove thickets. Like its counterpart in Nicaragua, the Honduran Mosquitia and adjoining portion of the interior highlands have remained sparsely populated and largely outside the path of national development" (61:61). "The vast area of Peten, comprising one-third of (Guatemala's) national territory, extends into the Yucatan Peninsula. It is a rolling limestone plateau, between 150 and 225 meters above sea level, covered with tropical rain forest interspersed with wide savannahs" (60:48). Like the Mosquito coast in Honduras, the Peten region is far outside the path of national development, its chief importance being newly discovered minerals and ancient Mayan historical sites.

In discussing the regional geography of the area, the importance of climatic variations based on altitude is significant for these three countries. The presence of highlands in an equatorial area (all Central America lies below 20 degrees latitude in the Tropical Zone) creates the

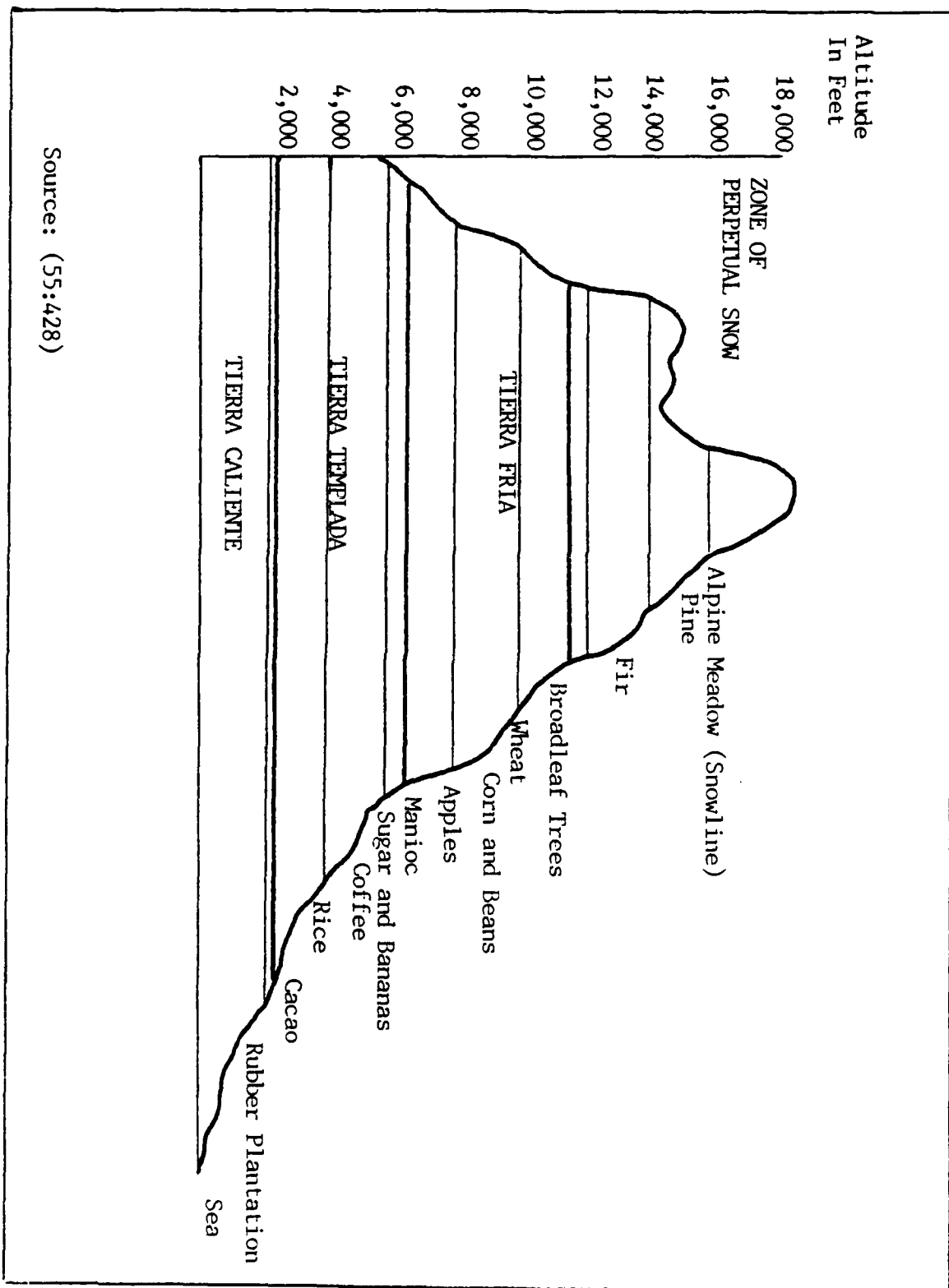
unusual situation where the majority of the population rarely experiences winter while located next to mountains where the snow rarely melts. A discussion of this anomaly follows:

The presence of mountains in all latitudes adds another variable to growth patterns of Latin America. The rapidly decreasing temperature gradient with altitude causes cool weather and offers less evapo-transpiration potential...Latin Americans recognize this change and speak of different living zones with altitude (Figure 2-3). There is 'tierra caliente', the hot lowland zone from 2,000 to 3,000 ft, where tropical crops such as sugar cane, cacao, and bananas grow; the 'tierra templada', the lower upland zones to 6,000 feet, where it is warm rather than hot, and coffee, corn and oranges reach the limit of their temperature tolerance; and the 'tierra fria', or the cold country, from 6,000 to about 10,000 feet, where temperatures are cool (57:427).

What does regional geography mean to Central America?

In the past, the traditional agrarian society chose to cultivate the tropical highlands as opposed to the more abundant and productive rain forests. Disease, insects, and difficulty in farming the jungle drove the Indians and later peoples to 'tierra templada' lands for comfort and ease in agricultural pursuits. Although spread out, these farmers grew on a small scale locally, raising only what they needed to exist. Lack of technology (i.e. refrigeration), transportation, and a market kept the Central Americans isolated and non-progressive throughout the nineteenth century. Only foreign capital investment opened up the abundant possibilities of the rain forests and coastal lowlands, as will be further discussed in the historical

FIGURE 2-3. CROSS-SECTION OF TEMPERATURE ZONES



Source: (55:428)



analysis section. New technology, a growing transportation system, year-round growing cycle, and untapped resources make Central America's inherent geography a blessing, if manipulated with prudence.

Cultural Geography. The cultural geographical aspects of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras cannot be so easily generalized as the regional equivalent, although some have presented it that way. A close look at the area's languages, ethnic groups, religions, education and literacy, class structure, and administrative divisions will highlight the region's similarities and numerous differences. John P. Augelli's article "The Controversial Image of Latin America: A Geographer's View" points out the necessity for examining the cultural geography of the area:

The term 'Latin America' was originally coined by the French presumably in an effort to differentiate those areas of the American hemisphere which were conquered and colonized by Europeans of Latin culture as the Spaniards and Portuguese from those settled by Anglo-Saxon stock. If this were the only implication of the term, there would be no quarrel. Unfortunately, however, with the passage of time 'Latin America' has come to signify a homogeneity of place and culture, of peoples and institutions and of problems and possibilities which simply does not exist. It may be convenient to lump into a neat pigeonhole labeled 'Latin America' virtually all of the lands and people between the United States-Mexican border and Tierra del Fuego, but in so doing, one perpetuates a myth...The nineteenth century intellectuals of the newly emancipated nations to the south were quick to adopt the French 'Latin' label. But how valid is such a label in an area peopled largely by Indians, meztizos, and Negroes who have only an

incidental connection with the white, Roman Catholic, aristocratic tradition of Latin Europe? In the words of Luis Alberto Sanchez, 'Existe America Latin?' - does 'Latin' America, in fact, exist (41:209-210)?

Ethnicity/race, linguistic patterns and religious preference, in general, are common within northern Central America in the sense that each country has racial and ethnic diversity, the majority speak Spanish, and most officially profess Roman Catholicism. A closer look reveals Honduran traits dependant on a regional basis, Guatemala racially and culturally divided, and El Salvador predominantly Ladino (a racial mixture of Spanish, Indian, and Black) with a strong and proud Indian minority. Hondura's Ladinos live mostly in the highlands with a smattering of Europeans, speak Spanish, and are staunch Roman Catholics. A majority of Hondurans belong to this race, but what makes this country so diverse are its out-of-touch minorities in the far corners of the land. Running the coastal business on the vast North Coast are English-speaking West Indian blacks and Black Caribs (racial mixture of Africans and Carib Indians) who practice either Protestantism or native religious customs, speak English or Garifuna, and number over 77,000 (61:94). Along with the blacks are large pockets of Palestinian Arabs and Chinese. In the southwest corner of the country are the Lenca Indians, on the Guatemalan border are Mayan descendants who speak Chorti, in the high mountains live the Jicaque tribe, and totally isolated on the Mosquito Coast

are the Miskito Indians. Some of these natives speak Spanish and officially profess Roman Catholicism, but the majority speak native languages and practice either a mixture or outright native religious customs. Making matters more complex for Honduras in the past twenty years has been the overflow of refugees from strife-ridden El Salvador and Nicaragua (61:68-98).

Guatemala, on the other hand, is a country culturally divided among the Ladinos and various Mayan Indians. Regionally, the Indians live in the north and east rural areas, while the Ladinos are the majority in the urban and coastal regions. As in Honduras, there are concentrations of Black Caribs and Arabs on the Caribbean Coast, and thousands of refugees in the southwest, but those are the only similarities. The racial and cultural differences between the ruling Ladinos and the tradition-proud Indians are great and have kept Guatemala a divided country. There are between 18 and 28 linguistic groups among the Mayans speaking four principal dialects: Quiche, Cahchiquel, Kechi, and Mam, and although 80% profess Catholicism, very few practice - most living according to ancient Mayan tribal traditions. The Peten rain forest and savannah is similar to the Mosquito Coast because it is isolated, but much different in that it's populace is neither large nor hostile to the government (60:51-59).

El Salvador is much more the "typical" Central American country in ethnic makeup, if that's conceivable, in that the large majority of the population is Ladino (80-95%) and the minority is Indian (5-20%). Although the Pipil Indians of Toltec (Mexican) heritage have strong traditional ties and speak both Spanish and Nahua, they have assimilated into Salvadoran society much more so than the Indians in Guatemala or Honduras. The overall majority of the country is Roman Catholic, but again, the Indians practice a much different Catholicism than Rome would desire. Other minorities include the Lenca Indian (Honduran border) and a small foreign sector of Lebanese, Turks, and Chinese, all an integral part of Salvadoran society. The race problem is small in El Salvador and up until the past 10-15 years, accounted for their relatively greater progress compared to the rest of northern Central America (3:49-66).

In terms of class structure, education, and literacy, the countries of northern Central America follow a similar pattern such that class divisions are based on multiple factors (occupation, urban/rural and regional locality, and racial distinction) as opposed to any one factor alone. Each country has a small upper class elite made up of aristocratic European or Ladino landowners with generations-old wealth, and are occupied as commercial agriculturalists, industrialists, bankers, or high-ranking military officers. This class represents no more than 1-5% of the populace, but

because of tremendous differences in education, wealth, and lifestyle, have kept pretty much of the nations' power despite constant political turmoil. The middle class is small in comparison to first and second world nations, but is growing, especially in El Salvador. Ethnically, the middle classes of Central America are very diverse due to heavy concentrations of Arabs, Chinese, English, and coastal blacks that make up the merchant sector. Included in the middle class, and ethnically primarily Ladino or European, are professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.), students, commercial agriculturalists, employees of various service-oriented businesses, public civil servants, and in El Salvador, engineers (3:25-47). As much as 30% of the populace makes up the middle class in El Salvador, perhaps 20% in Guatemala, and no more than 10% in Honduras (61:41-57). The lower class, differentiated from all others by poor education, rural lifestyle, and overwhelmingly occupied in agriculture, are ethnically Indian and lower class Ladino. Comprising 60-85% of the populace in each country, the lower class of Central America is engaged in some of the most manual and crude forms of agriculture practiced on earth and certainly in the western hemisphere (47:30). In Honduras, especially on the Mosquito Coast, the lifestyle can be described primitive since hunting, fishing, and subsistence agriculture are the dominant means of survival.

Overall literacy in northern Central America is around

50% (47:28) with the average person receiving 6-9 years of education, although those statistics vary widely among the classes. The greatest obstacle to education is as much a rural problem as it is a class and ethnic problem since most rural residents are Indians and lower class Ladinos. Urban literacy is closer to 75% and rural can be anything from totally illiterate to no more than 30-40% literacy (60:115-130). Urbanization of each country has increased in the recent past, and in that regard, education may be on the rise. In the past, the majority of rural education, what little existed, was provided by Roman Catholic clergy and Protestant missionaries; today, the stocks of religious teachers are dwindling. Unfortunately, urbanization and industrialization have occurred at the same excruciatingly slow pace for northern Central America. El Salvador has been the most industrial of the three, yet only 15.8% of the workforce is engaged in manufacturing (56:64) and no more than 41% are urbanized (57:27). 39% are urbanized in Guatemala and 36% in Honduras (57:27) with only 10.5-12.8% engaged in manufacturing as opposed to 54-58% in agriculture (56:64). Recent problems in the political and military environment certainly do not assist growth and development, as pointed out by National Geographic senior writer Mike Edwards in a recent article on Honduras, as follows.

...enormous problems still dog Honduras. Nearly half of the four million people cannot read. Development lags; Central America looks risky to investors. Tourism has shrunk to a trickle of divers lured to the reefs around the Bay Islands, off the Caribbean coast. Most visitors pursue other affairs. At my hotel in Tegucigalpa, the capitol, were arrayed one day a table of missionaries, one of arms merchants, and one of journalists looking for a war (43:621).

Demographics. An area of tremendous concern for all Central Americans and Salvadorans in particular is an explosive population growth. Current population for the area is over 16 million and will likely grow to 26 million by the year 2000 (57:6-25) compared to 6.4 million for the states of Alabama and Mississippi, an area of comparable size in the U.S. (51:129). As the figures below show, in terms of density, El Salvador is experiencing the greatest squeeze on its available land. However, when density for arable land is considered, notice how drastically the figures rise for Guatemala and Honduras; a fact which can be attributed to the vast uninhabitable rain forests and extreme highlands (57:6-25).

<u>Country</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Year 2000</u>	<u>Density</u>	<u>Arable Density</u>
El Salvador	4,617,000	7,000,000	222	383
Guatemala	7,537,000	12,000,000	65	282
Honduras	4,103,000	7,000,000	32	104

Source: (57:6-25)

For a predominantly agricultural society, this continuing encroachment of humanity on limited arable land is bound to spread the seeds of disaster. High rates of fertility, growth, and birth indicate that overpopulation in these three countries is a reality, since the statistics exhibit not only current problems, but evidence of explosive growth in the future. Table I shows that this area of Central America is among the fastest growing in the world in terms of total fertility (number of children born to the average woman in a lifetime), growth rate as a percent of current population, birth rate, and fertility rate as the number of live births per 1000 females. Only Africa and portions of Asia and the Middle East have population growth as great as Central America; certainly these countries are among the most explosive in the Western Hemisphere (57:6-35).

Study of the causes of overpopulation have focused on the primary reasons countries are unable to control their population growth. The great dividing line seems to be between industrialized economies and developing economies which exhibit the following traits: low level of literacy, poverty, predominantly rural, dominant occupations of farming and labor, low development of communication and transportation, low spatial mobility, low consumption of electricity and fuel, and insufficient medical care (62:53). Add weak governmental control or interest in population



TABLE I

POPULATION GROWTH RATES FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES

<u>Selected Country/Region</u>	<u>Total* Fertility</u>	<u>Growth Rate</u>	<u>Birth Rate/1000</u>	<u>Fertility Rate/1000</u>
<u>Central America</u>				
El Salvador	5.6	3.0	39.7	194.5
Guatemala	5.2	3.1	42.9	177.0
Honduras	6.5	4.1	48.6	224.6
<u>Industrial West</u>				
United States	1.8	1.0	15.8	61.1
Australia	2.0	1.3	15.5	65.7
West Germany	1.0	0.0	9.5	38.9
<u>Far East</u>				
China	2.3	1.4	26.0	112.5
India	4.8	2.3	34.4	136.7
Japan	1.7	0.4	14.3	56.0
<u>Africa</u>				
Egypt	4.6	3.0	41.0	126.4
Kenya	8.0	4.0	50.5	218.0
Nigeria	6.9	2.6	50.3	217.8
<u>Middle East</u>				
Israel	3.1	1.9	24.7	112.7
Kuwait	5.7	6.3	41.5	207.7
Turkey	4.5	2.2	39.6	175.0

Source: (Q1:6-22), \*(E1:6-17)

growth to strong religious motivation to continue traditional ways of life and the dilemma of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras becomes greater. For instance, these three countries rank at the bottom of the world in the use of contraceptives (7-22% for women of child-bearing age) and at the top in illegitimate births as a percentage of total births (65-69%) (57:27-45).

In comparison to the other three countries, El Salvador certainly has the greatest pressure on its land mass, as evidenced by the lowest annual population growth in the world (-2.4%), high fertility rates and large family size which together represent tremendous movement out of the country. Honduras ranks 11th in the world in fertility and 35th (of 187) in both household size and refugee population, not enviable figures. Guatemala isn't any better with the same high growth rates and a booming refugee population, currently ranking 21st in the world (57:27-45). Without a doubt, overpopulation is representative of the many drawbacks to national development in the area, and perhaps the least promising for a solution in the near future.

### Historical Analysis

The Mayan Legacy. In stark contrast to present times, this region once was the height of civilization in the Western Hemisphere. Although subjugated long before the arrival of the Spaniards and Portuguese, the descendants

remained and have influenced the area since. Several estimates of Indian population in the Americas have been given, one of the most reliable by Angel Rosenblatt, who "made a special study of primitive conditions of life in America at that time, the productivity of the land, and the amount of territory occupied by the various Indian groups", estimating "a total population of 13,385,000 for both Americas...for Canada and the United States...1,000,000 natives, for Mexico 4,500,000, for Central America 800,000, and for South America 6,785,000" (7:148). The majority of those 800,000 were of Mayan descent and located in northern Central America, principally Guatemala and the Yucatan Peninsula. Best estimates place the Mayas in southwestern Mexico eight or nine thousand years B.C., where, after the discovery of corn, they settled in the Guatemalan lowlands. These early Mayas were nomadic, living off the land surrounding their great religious centers. The "Archaic Era" of the Maya is estimated to be between 600 B.C. and A.D. 300 in most texts, and it is the true beginning of "the Mayan Legacy". "During this period the Mayas worked out the laborious beginnings of their calendar, their system of writing, the basis of their architecture, and an incipient art" (7:11).

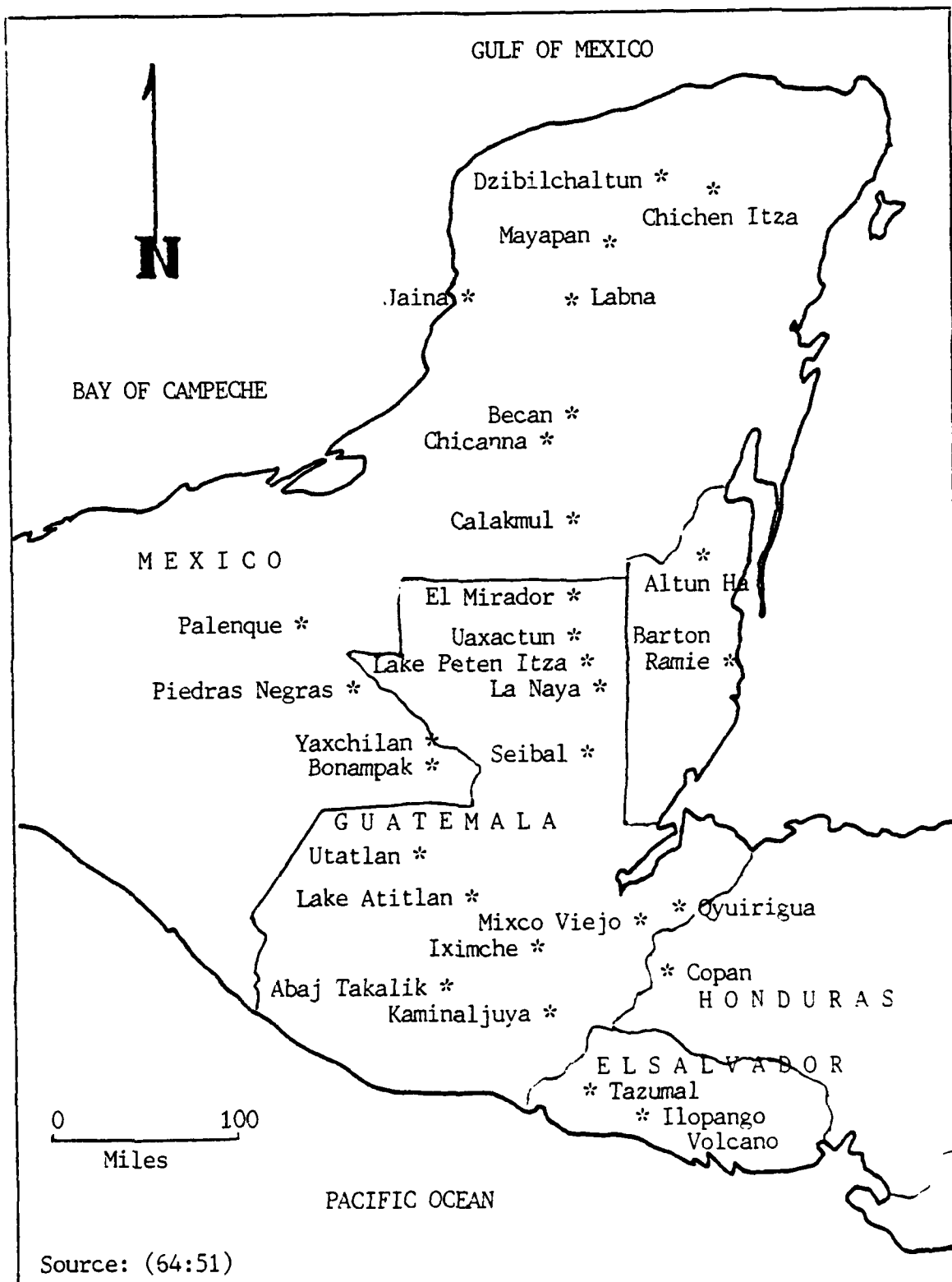
The Classic Period of the Maya, or the Golden Age, ranging somewhere between 300 and 900 A.D., with the years between 800 and 900 A.D. sometimes referred to as the Late

Classic Period. During the Classic Period, the Mayas developed great centers of population in Guatemala and Honduras, slowly creeping north towards the Yucatan by the end of the period, marked by the increasing complexity and beauty of their temples. Figure 2-4 depicts classic Maya civilization's landmarks. These landmarks represent an extremely advanced culture for its time, with an alphabet and hieroglyphic system and an accurate, complicated mathematical base. The religious centers are significant since they are dated very accurately, and are responsible for what is known about the Maya and what remains mysterious. The mystery refers to certain years when, for unexplained reasons, Maya culture seems to have disintegrated. The first such period was between 582 and 673, when "not a single dated monument has been identified" (D1:54). The second period ends the Classic Era, and remains a mystery.

Between A.D. 800 and 900, Classic Maya civilization of the southern highlands broke down and vanished. Richard E. W. Adams calls this 'a demographic, cultural, and social catastrophe in which elite and peasant went down together... The sequence of the calamity appears in the final Long Count dates carved in the declining centers: Piedras Negras, 795; Palenque, 799; Bonampak, 800; Quieigrea, 805; Tikal, 869; Uaxactun, 889. That sequence creates a pattern. The earliest signs of trouble appear on the fringes of the lowland Maya area; the latest, in its very heart. Apparently, trouble came with an invasion of strangers... (67:92).

Some say it was more than strangers, attributing the decline to overpopulation, malnutrition, disease, syphilis.

FIGURE 2-4. ANCIENT MAYAN SITES IN CENTRAL AMERICA



and cultural problems like those experienced by the Romans. However, when the Mayas reappear around 1000 A.D., it is a new Maya Toltec culture centered in the Yucatan peninsula around the famous site, Chichen Itza. This period is called Post-Classic, lasts from around 1000-1200 A.D., and is responsible for even more spectacular Maya achievements: iron sculptures, pyramids, advanced hieroglyphics and mathematics. After 1200, this culture experienced a rapid decline, for whatever reason, and was soon incorporated into the Aztec-Toltec civilization, effectively ending the Maya era. The Aztecs were great warriors, although far inferior to early Maya culture, and it was these Indians that the Spanish met first in Middle America. However, it is the Maya legacy that characterizes the region, described below:

How did these American cultures compare with each other?...The Mayas, whose early history paralleled that of Teotihuacan, developed the most refined of all the American Indian cultures...The Toltecs cannot be appraised accurately because they represent a connecting link between the Mayas...and the Aztecs...However, Toltec culture does not represent the highwater mark of Indian history in Mexico, nor does that of the Aztecs, who, despite all of their barbaric splendor, constituted a regression and not an advance in Mexican civilization (7:61).

Spanish Conquest. It was these Aztecs that Hernan Cortez and his conquistadores met in 1518 with "110 sailors, 553 soldiers, 16 horses", and "a couple of hundred Indian islanders, who came along to do the menial chores" (7:74). To make a long and interesting story short, Cortez and his

men defeated the Tabascan Indians, the Totonacs, and the Tlaxacalans before defeating the Aztecs led by Montezuma in the great city of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) on August 13, 1521 (7:85). While Cortez was attempting to subjugate the Aztecs into "New Spain", one of his lieutenants, Pedro de Alvarado, "led about four hundred men southward into the jungles of Guatemala, where there were said to be great cities decorated with gold and silver" (7:89). He never found the great Maya centers, but became the first governor of Guatemala in 1524 and remained there until 1534, when he sailed for Peru. Francisco Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru, offered Alvarado a tremendous sum of money to return to Guatemala, which he did. Before heading out to search for the Spice Islands, he "established several towns in Honduras, Salvador, and Guatemala" (7:89) and was finally killed in a battle in 1541 in southern Mexico. His wife, Dona Beatiz de la Cueva, became governor of Guatemala, one of the first women in the New World to hold such an office, but died shortly thereafter in one of Guatemala's fateful earthquakes (7:90). The colonization of Central America had begun and was quite different from the colonization of other parts of the world, as described below:

Spain and Portugal faced tremendous disadvantages when they undertook the colonization which followed the period of conquest. They were thinly populated countries with no excess population to send overseas. They were poor and lacked an overflow of wealth or the products of industry to help finance and strengthen the development of the new territories...Unlike England in North America,

Spain and Portugal never attempted to establish small, slow-growing colonies which would be left to develop and govern themselves much as they saw fit. What they undertook was an imperial conquest in the Roman sense: to impose their languages, their religion, their culture, their way of life on millions of colonial subjects of a different race and level of civilization (7:146-147).

The Spanish established the "encomienda" (7:155) system which divided the land of Latin America among its settlers, to include all the Indians living on the land as the subjects and labor pool as in the medieval European feudal system. After the discovery of gold, the Indians were also put to work in the ruins under intolerable conditions. Indian women became the consorts of Spanish soldiers and land-owners, producing the "mestizo" class that eventually ruled the land. The Dominicans, Franciscans, Mercedarians, and eventually, the Jesuits undertook the task of converting the Indians to Roman Catholicism and educating them in Spanish (60:12). These descendants of the great Maya civilizations didn't react well to their new masters' way of life, losing great numbers to disease and poor working conditions. Many refused to live under Spanish domination, reverting to traditional life, and accepting whatever punishment the encomienderos (land-owners) chose to inflict on them. For these reasons, the Spanish began importing slaves from Africa to work the mines, and since these Blacks proved much more adaptable than the Indians, they remained in Latin America contributing the third racial element into the population, forming the Mulatto and Ladino



classes (61:10).

In 1544, the Central American region constituted an "audencia" (territorial division) and included present day Central America plus the Mexican states of Chiapas, Yucatan and Tabasco. Its capitol at Gracias, Honduras until 1549 when it moved to Antigua Guatemala (then Santiago de los Caballeros), the five-man ruled audencia was subservient to the Viceroyalty of New Spain, headquartered in Mexico City - all subservient to the crown in Spain. Problems with the Indians acceptance of the encomienda system and internal strife prompted a change in 1570, with the establishment of the audencia of Guatemala: Central America minus Panama plus Chiapas in Mexico (7:95-115).

Throughout the remainder of the 16th century and all of the 17th and 18th centuries, the Spanish dominated Central America. Development of the area was slow, the only progress made was in the religious education of millions of Indians, and the establishment of a university (whites only) in San Carlos, Guatemala (60:9). During the 1600s, the British began to establish their influence in the Caribbean coast, especially in Belize and the Honduran Bay Islands. The Spanish finally drove the British out of Honduras and Guatemala in 1780, but the Anglos remained permanently in Belize (61:11-12). This 250 year period is characterized by the establishment of Spanish influence upon every facet of colonial life, the unparalleled mixture of races, and most

unfortunately, no development of self-government. In 1786, El Salvador finally broke from Guatemala and was granted the rank of "intendancy" - that is, politically equal to Honduras and Nicaragua (3:11).

Independence. Dramatic changes in the European world and North America in the latter quarter of the 18th century and first quarter of the 19th had a profound effect on Central America. Independence in the U.S., revolution in France, the Napoleonic Empire, and the decline of Spain set up conditions ripe for revolution in Latin America. Relegated to second class status in Europe (the Great Powers of the Vienna Congress of 1815 were England, France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia), Spain's internal degradation and loss of wealth meant her ability to govern her colonies would also diminish. "The deposition of Ferdinand VI by Napoleon and the subsequent support of most of the colonies for the anti-Napoleonic Junta of Cadiz, was the first step on the road to independence" (46:254). The next step was a combination of revolutions in South America led by men like Simon Bolivar, a constitutional government in Spain in 1812, the return of Ferdinand to the throne in 1814, and a revolution in Spain in 1820 restoring the constitution. The final step was the Mexican war of independence and Augustin Iturbide I's declaration of independence on April 10, 1821 (7:649). Gabino Gainza declared Guatemalan independence on September 15, and designated himself president of the

Federation of Central America (60:15).

Iturbide's dream of a Mexican empire from California to Panama was shattered, for he couldn't consolidate his power. El Salvador, fearful of both Mexico and Guatemala, petitioned the United States for statehood in 1822, but eventually joined the second Federation of Central American states (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica), which declared independence from Mexico and Spain on July 1, 1823 (60:15). El Salvador's Manuel Jose Arce was elected as the Federation's first president, residing in Guatemala City, the first capital. The first dispute arose as conservatives (pro-clerical) gained control through Arce, igniting the liberal (anti-clerical) governments in Guatemala and El Salvador. Arce's armies intervened in Guatemala to some degree of success, but was not as fortunate in dealing with trouble in Honduras. Liberal Francisco Morazan (Honduras' national hero) overthrew Arce, and was then elected president of the federation in 1830, moving the capitol to San Salvador. Jose Cecilio del Valle, another Honduran, was elected president in 1834, but died shortly thereafter, and Morazan agreed to another term. Trouble in Guatemala led to a revolution and coup by an illiterate mestizo, Jose Rafael Carrera, in 1838. Although Morazan interceded, he failed to hold the federation together and by 1839, only El Salvador remained. Morazan fled to Costa Rica and mounted an army

which attempted to restore the federation, but he was defeated and executed in 1842, effectively ending the federation (60:14-16).

The remainder of the century was chaotic, Guatemala emerging as the most dominant in northern Central America, El Salvador the most developed, and Honduras the most backward. Guatemala's strength was due to its inherited position as leader of Central America from the Spanish and two strong dictators. Jose Carrera ruled from 1838 until 1865, establishing Guatemala's military and strengthening the role of the church. His appointee for succession, General Vicente Cervua was overthrown by Miguel Garcia Granados during a period of liberal-conservative strife, sharing rule with Justo Rufino Barrios, who was elected president in 1873 and lasted as dictator until 1885. He was succeeded in 1886 by Manuel Barillas and in 1891 by Jose Maria Reyna Barrios (nephew), who was assassinated in 1898. Manuel Estrada Cabrera was elected president in 1898 and remained in power until 1920 (60:17-20).

El Salvador was provided a president by Guatemala, Francisco Malespin, who lasted from 1843 until Francisco Duenas was elected in 1852. Between 1852 and 1903, 11 presidents, 5 coups, 2 executions, and 2 dictators dominated the political scene within El Salvador. The two dictators were Santiago Gonzalez (1871-1875) and General Carlos Erzeta (1890-1894), both of whom allowed elections after their four

year terms. The period was characterized by the strengthening of its military against the threat in Guatemala and against opposition leaders in Honduras and Nicaragua. There were wars against Guatemala's dictators in 1875, 1885, and 1890, several incursions and a war with Honduras in 1899 (3:13-14).

Honduras had more leaders in the 19th century than most countries have had in modern history. Led primarily by 'caudillos' (strong men), Honduras suffered through revolution, chaos, and invasion from the moment Central America declared independence: 20 leaders ruled from 1824-1842. General Francisco Ferrara gained control of the country and then allowed Juan Lindo Zalaya to be "elected" in 1847. He was succeeded by Trinidad Cabanas in 1852, who was overthrown by the Guatemalans and replaced by Santos Guardiola - a man so unpopular he was assassinated by his own honor guard in 1862. There was no order in Honduras until General Jose Maria restored it in 1871. Guatemala provided the next few presidents until General Luis Bogran replaced Marco Aurelio Soto in 1882. Guatemala and Nicaragua stepped in again and a Honduran wasn't in control again until General Terencio Sierra was elected president in 1899 (61:14-18).

The other events which mark the period were Guatemala's treaty with Britain in 1859, recognizing British Honduras (Belize) in exchange for a highway to the Caribbean (which

was never built) and American William Walker, a soldier of fortune who established himself as president of Nicaragua in the 1850s, was thrown out by other Central American countries, surrendered to the British and was killed by a Honduran firing squad (61:15). Such was Central America after independence.

The Banana Republics. After the El Salvador-Honduras War of 1899, the most important event of the waning century was the origin of fruit trade: "In that year the Vaccaro brothers of New Orleans, founders of what would become the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company, shipped their first boatload of bananas from Honduras to New Orleans" (61:19). Soon after, numerous fruit merchants (most notably U.S.-based United Fruit) ventured into Central America to reap huge profits. Within a decade, U.S. investment in the area became so intense that North American firms soon dominated the region's economics and politics. Dictator Cabrera of Guatemala gave the U.S. companies a free reign in return for investment in the nation's transportation systems and the relatively peaceful government of El Salvador integrated the new wealth to build a relatively prosperous economy. The U.S. military became a common sight in Honduras throughout the first 30 years of the century, protecting U.S. firms from rebellion, and Honduras itself from neighboring assaults (Guatemala, 1906, 1908; Nicaragua, 1906; El Salvador, 1908). Not until General Tiburcio Carias Andino

was elected in 1931 could Honduras exist free from invasion, rebellion, and constant coups (61:19-38).

The world depression brought dictators in all three countries: Jorge Ubico (1931-1944) in Guatemala, General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez (1931-1944) in El Salvador, and General Carias Andino in Honduras (1932-1949). These dictators brought stability to their countries and the region, improving the economy, education, and military, were generally pro-U.S., and all entered World War II on the side of the allies (despite considerable German capital and presence in Guatemala). On the other hand, their regimes were oppressive - dominating their peoples through the military and civil police. Eventually, as always, opposition gained momentum, and the dictators in El Salvador and Guatemala were overthrown, plunging both countries into states of disorder. General Carias managed to avert the crisis in Honduras, probably because of poorly conceived opposition, and passed the presidency to Juan Manuel Galvez through free election in 1949. After several coups, Guatemala adopted a constitution in 1945 and elected Juan Jose Arevalo to office with 85% of the vote (60:20-30) while El Salvador struggled in revolt until Major Oscar Osorio was elected president in 1950.

During this time, U.S. influence was paramount: the United Fruit Company and the International Railroads of Central America (IRCA), among others, were an integral part

of every event and had great influence in Washington (61:19-38). This involvement led to one of the U.S.'s most controversial undertakings in the area in 1954, after Captain Jacobo Arbenz Guzman was elected president of Guatemala (1950) and nationalized nearly all foreign holdings. In addition to Arbenz' desire to free Guatemala from foreign influence, he was reportedly pro-Castro and anti-U.S. (60:29-30). The CIA organized an armed rebellion based in Honduras and El Salvador under the leadership of Castillo Armas and overthrew the Arbenz government, Armas claiming the presidency on July 8, 1954. He immediately restored all land-holdings and removed restrictions against foreigners, the U.S. recognizing the new government on July 13 (60:30). Armas was assassinated in 1957, his popularity among Guatemalans not strong, and President Ydigoras was elected in 1958, only to be overthrown in 1963 by Colonel Enrique Paralta Azudia (60:30-31).

El Salvador had been free of military intervention in politics until General Martinez' coup in 1931, but has been controlled by the military since. Major Osorio was succeeded by Lt Col Jose Maria Lemus in 1956, who strengthened the military position for four years, but was ousted by leftist, pro-Castro officers in 1960. They, in turn, were deposed by a counter coup of conservative officers in 1961, who adopted a new constitution in 1962 (3:19-20).

After the trouble in Guatemala in 1954, hotly-contested



elections in Honduras produced no winner and vice president Lozano Diaz assumed control of the government for the ailing Galvez. In 1956, Major Roberto Galvez set up a military junta to restore order, and after several border disputes with Nicaragua over the Mosquitia region, he allowed free elections in 1963 (61:37-38).

Third World. Continued strife, overpopulation, debt-ridden economies, and poor living conditions characterize El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras as Third World nations in modern times. The Central American Common Market, established in the 1960s, gave hope of a unified, progressive Central America ready to leave its tumultuous past behind. "Unfortunately, most of this progress was undone in the 1970s. Political turmoil reached a peak in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Economic stability was shattered. Honduras withdrew from the market, Costa Rica threatened to do so, and the bright dream lost its glow. The countries of Central America again went their divided ways" (7:746).

In El Salvador, Lt Col Julio Adalberto Rivera and his National Conciliation Party (PCN) was elected to a five year term in 1962. After a peaceful, prosperous term, another PCN member was elected in 1967, Colonel Fidel Sanchez Hernandez. At this time, El Salvador was the most progressive country in Central America with the possible exception of Costa Rica; the future looked bright. But an

increasing population problem that had resulted in a mass exodus to Honduras soon led to friction and in 1969, El Salvador and Honduras went to war. Publicized as the "soccer war" for riots occurring during national matches, the year-long conflict resulted in 3,000 to 4,000 casualties, animosity between the neighboring countries, and thousands of misplaced refugees (3:22-23). The Salvadorans soon grew tired of military government and by 1977, the guerilla movement began its assault on the government and those who supported it (46:401).

Terrorism and guerilla warfare forced Colonel Peratto's government in Guatemala to draft a new constitution and renew elections in 1965. After a year of kidnappings and high-level murders, Julio Cesar Mendez Montenegro was elected president in 1966, but was forced to sign a pact of submission with the military for four years (60:32). The anti-government guerilla movement refused to acknowledge the election and continued to turn the nation into a battle ground. The election of Colonel Arana Osorio in 1970 led to an anti-terrorist campaign that marked the government for years as ruthless. The fraudulent election of National Liberation Movement (MLN) candidate General Kjell Eugenio Laugerud Garcia continued repressive rule and internal warfare against the numerous guerilla groups. The Department of State's human rights report in 1977 characterized the Guatemalan government as oppressive

and led to closing of U.S. military aid to the country until 1983. Brigadier General Fernando Romes Lucas Garcia's term from 1978 to 1982 "was riddled with incompetence, corruption, widespread murder conducted by government officials, rapid growth of the armed, guerilla opposition..." (60:37) and led to his overthrow in 1982 by General Jose Efraim Rios Montt (60:38).

Military control of the government continued in Honduras until the election of Ramon Ernesto Cruz (Nationals faction of the National Unity Pact Party) in 1971. His war-torn country, which like Guatemala and El Salvador had felt the additional wrath of hurricanes and earthquakes in the late 60's, was in no shape for reform. Poverty, strife, and general discontent led the military to overthrow Cruz and re-install Lopez Arellano as president. After another devastating hurricane in 1974 and allegations of United Fruit bribery to government officials, the military relieved Arellano of his duties and replaced him with Colonel Juan Melgar Castro (61:46). Castro's regime lasted four years through renewed strife with Nicaragua and ended with a coup by General Policarpo Paz Garcia. Civilian rule returned in 1982 with the election of Roberto Suazo Cordova (61:49-50).

## Economic Analysis

Among Central America's many unsolved problems are its unbalanced, slow-growing, debt-ridden economies. The countries of northern Central America are no exception. With Gross National Products (GNP) that range between \$2.8 and \$9.9 billion, annual growths of -2.0% to 1.5%, and annual per capita incomes of \$1,185 (Guatemala), \$854 (El Salvador), and \$590 (Honduras), these countries can certainly be classified Third World (21,22,23:1). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the low ratio between those engaged in industry as opposed to agriculture adds significantly to the problem, especially considering that what industry and agriculture is practiced can be described as rudimentary. For instance, the chief industries in these countries are textiles, cement, prepared food, wood and petroleum products, and construction materials - not automobiles, chemicals, and electronics. The agriculture is manually intensive, producing such crops as coffee, bananas, sugar, cotton, corn, beans, and tobacco. Major imports are machinery, automobiles, fuels, lubricants, and processed metals: typical of countries with no industrial base. Its major partners in trade are the U.S. (30%), the Central American Common Market (25%), the European Common Market (15%), Japan (10%), other Latin American countries (15%), and others (5%) (21,22,23:1). Unfortunately, all three

countries suffer an imbalance of trade, as depicted below:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Exports Per Capita</u>	<u>Imports Per Capita</u>	<u>Pct Primary Products Export</u>
El Salvador	\$195.00	\$236.00	64.3%
Guatemala	\$165.00	\$194.00	77.9%
Honduras	\$176.00	\$202.00	90.1%

Source: (57:135-147)

The results of such poor economies (12-19% live in absolute poverty 57:103) are growing international debt and massive economic aid required to exist. According to the World Bank, external public debt has grown tremendously from 1970-1981 in El Salvador (\$126 - \$1034.6 million), Guatemala (\$175 - \$1041.1), and Honduras (\$143.9 - 1931.0) with no end in sight (67:284-295). Economic aid and development assistance pour in; aid from international organizations alone totaled \$971 million in Honduras from 1946-81, \$726.6 million in Guatemala, and \$610.9 million in El Salvador (57:74). Add to these figures aid and assistance from the 17 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as well as massive aid from the U.S., and these three countries rank among the top 80 of the world in receiving aid (57:72).

There are many other indicators of economic status that

could be reviewed, but all ultimately point to one fact: the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are so poor that they cannot exist without foreign assistance.

### Political Status

El Salvador. Under the new constitution of 1983, El Salvador is a democratic republic led by President Jose Napoleon Duarte and a National Assembly (21:4). Typical of Latin American countries trying to build a democracy, El Salvador is working strenuously to keep the military out of political affairs, establish free and fair elections, and develop an effective judicial system. "The high voter turnout in all three elections (since 1983) indicates the Salvadorean people's commitment to democracy" (21:4). The political arena is made up of 6 parties: Democratic Action (AD), National Republican Alliance (ARENA), Salvadoran Authentic Institution Party (PAISA), Party of National Conciliation (PCN), Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and Salvadoran Popular Party (PPS) (21:1).

The new government faces a great challenge from the communist-supported leftist guerillas currently assembled into the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) who contest the government's authority.

Guerillas view political instability and economic chaos, designed to erode popular will to resist, as keys to their strategy of assuming power. Damage...and costs of prosecuting the war are estimated to have cost nearly \$1 billion (21:5).

Human rights violations, murder, and kidnappings have placed El Salvador in a state of siege and sent thousands of refugees across the border to Honduras and Guatemala. President Duarte's search for peace through meetings with the guerillas has resulted in very limited progress; continued support of the rebels by the Soviet Union and Cuba via Nicaragua should keep the civil war brewing for years to come. Certainly this will thwart, if not end, dreams of the democratic process.

Guatemala. The most recent constitution of 1965 proclaims Guatemala a republic, but the country has been run by military leaders since 1970, although legal elections took place in 1970, 1974, and 1978. The 1982 elections were considered fraudulent by most and the military placed Brigadier General Efraim Jose Rios Montt head of a junta that "cancelled the 1965 constitution, dissolved the Congress, suspended political parties, and cancelled the law governing elections" (22:4). Guerilla forces had been existent in Guatemala throughout the 1970s and were made up of four groups: the Guerilla Army of the Poor (EGP), the Revolutionary Organization of Armed People (ORPA), the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), and the Communist Party (PGT) formed into a single unit - the Guatemala National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) (22:4). The inability of Rios Montt to contain these guerillas resulted in a military coup on August 8, 1983, which placed the current Head of State, Major General

Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores, in command. He has vowed to return the country to constitutional control and has reinstated the democratic political process; 17 political parties and 3 civic associations are working on a new constitution that will elect a new president and congress. (22:5).

Honduras. Like its neighbors, Honduras has a new constitution and a new vow from the military to support a democratic political process. As opposed to its neighbors, Honduras has a viable democracy, little guerilla opposition, moderate viewpoints from its political parties, and a "good human rights record" (23:3). the extremely popular president Dr. Roberto Suazo Cordova was elected in 1982 after 18 years of military rule and faces the task of building a viable democracy. Fortunately, the political parties - the National Party (PNH), the Liberal Party (PLH), and the smaller Innovation and Unity Party (PINU) and Christian Democrat Party (PDCH) - are "committed to the democratic process of political change" (23:3). Chances are good with continued U.S. assistance against the threat from communist-controlled Nicaragua that Honduras can make great strides towards improving its long-standing status as the poorest and most backwards country in Central America.



## Military Analysis

The military has played a key role in northern Central America since independence. A low percentage of the population (see below), military personnel are better educated, enjoy higher living standards, and are much more influential than the average citizens of their countries.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Active Military Personnel</u>	<u>Force as % of Population</u>	<u>Annual Mil. Expenditures</u>
El Salvador	25,150	0.54	\$157 million
Guatemala	21,550	0.28	\$142 million
Honduras	15,200	0.37	\$ 60 million

Source: (14:192-281)

Except for sporadic border clashes, the military in each country has seen more action internally than externally, especially when differing political factions struggle for power. Most currently, the military of El Salvador is waging a civil war against the leftist guerilla organization FMLN (46:404). "The Guatemalan Armed forces seem destined to continue to face a problem of chronic low-level insurgency, which they can at best hope to contain but have no hope of eliminating" (46:267). The U.S.-backed Honduran forces, although facing little terrorist activity from within, are threatened by civil war in El Salvador and "left-wing subversion based in Nicaragua" (46:293). A comparison of these forces follows by country.

El Salvador. Due to its smaller size and dubious location, the Salvadoran Army developed much earlier than those in either Guatemala or Honduras. El Salvador contracted professional military assistance in building competent armed forces from the French (1860s), the Germans (1890s), German-influenced Chileans (1901-1957), the Italians (1930s), and the U.S. since 1957 (46:406). "Until 1931 it (the army) had maintained a noteworthy record of avoiding involvement in politics, but since that time has become a dominant political force" (3:194). Despite a strong alliance with the Chilean military mission, the army and the government increasingly turned to the U.S. after the second world war. U.S. influence, its Military Assistance Program (MAP), and the establishment of a military mission placed the U.S. in an important role with respect to Salvadoran forces. "The country is almost entirely dependant on outside aid for its armament, equipment,... material...and much of its training" (3:192) - that being provided principally by the U.S. "In the period 1981-83 the value of U.S. military aid rose to \$235,000,000 and 477 officers and over 1,000 infantrymen received training in the United States" (46:415).

From an organizational standpoint, the military covers three Defence Zones, which are the same as the major administrative divisions into which the 14 departments are grouped: Western Zone, Central Zone, and Eastern Zone. The

62,000 military, paramilitary, and reserve personnel are divided among the Army (22,500), Navy (300), Air Force (2350), Paramilitary Forces (4,000 Guardia Nacional; 3,000 Policia Nacional; 2,000 Policia Nacional de Hacienda), and the Reserves (30,000) (14:192-193). Prior to the current civil war, the army was basically responsible for ground defence of the three zones, but has since added an anti-guerilla battalion and trebled its Special Forces to 22,000 personnel by 1983 (46:410). The Navy is principally a Coast Guard and has been preoccupied in the past with "administration of the country's four ports". Again, the civil war has seen the formation of a unit of Marines "which was in action against guerillas in the eastern part of the country in May 1984" (46:473). The Salvadoran air Force existed in the past only because of U.S. influence and 'Central America's best Air Force' in its rival neighbor Honduras. Since the civil war, the addition of 34 Bell UH-1H helicopters supplied by the United States to combat the guerillas has added to a quickly growing air force (46:413,473). The paramilitary forces, primarily the Guardia Nacional (a state police similar to the Spanish Guardia Civil), have battled the guerillas since the beginning of the war and are growing as the war and U.S. assistance continues. Although the paramilitary forces are in theory responsible for internal affairs, "the escalation of mainly left-wing guerilla activity and right-wing

terrorist violence has involved an increasing level of participation by the armed forces in counter-insurgency operations" (46:402-415).

Guatemala. The armed forces of Guatemala do not face threats the magnitude of those faced by either El Salvador nor Honduras, but at their current posture, could not meet them either. Continuous, albeit small, internal subversion preoccupies the majority of the military's efforts and is complicated by a non-supportive, "highly polarised and mutually antagonistic" Indian population (46:256). The 'external threat', which is nonexistent, has been an occupation with "Guatemala's territorial claim" to the nation of Belize, complicated by an 1859 treaty the British failed to comply with any Mexican claims to the area (46:256). A token British force in now independent Belize keeps Guatemala honest, particularly after Britain's show of force in the Falkland Islands (46:71).

As for the history of Guatemala's relatively small forces of 20,000 Army, 950 Navy, and 600 Air Force personnel (14:264-265), it is roughly parallel to El Salvador's in terms of early development. Influenced by the French and supported by long-lasting dictatorships, the Guatemalan armed forces engaged in several attempts to expand its territory and influence in the nineteenth century, mostly in the name of the Central American Federation. The military practically ceased to exist

from 1920-31 between dictatorships, but General Jorge Ubico used U.S. support to rebuild the army until he was forced to resign in 1944 (60:183-184). Continued U.S. influence dominated the Guatemalan military from the end of World War II until the late 1970s, despite an intense general dislike of the North Americans. "Although the intensely xenophobic Guatemalan Army had suffered the supreme humiliation of having to request the assistance of U.S. Special Forces in the suppression of guerilla activity in the late 1960s and early 1970s U.S. military aid continued on a massive level" until "Guatemala renounced all further U.S. military aid in 1978 after the Carter administration attempted to relate military assistance to the performance of the Guatemalan government in the human rights field" (46:260). Since that time, the Israelis have become the chief supplier and trainer of Guatemalan forces and, although the Reagan administration has renewed security assistance, "Israeli influence remains strong and the Guatemalan Army is now primarily equipped with personal weapons and equipment of Israeli origin" (46:260).

Honduras. The development and relative strength of the Honduran armed forces have an interesting and unique history. From approximately 1838 (independence) to the early 1920s (sources disagree on this stage), the military was an instrument of whatever 'caudillos' (political strong men) happened to be in control of an ever-changing

government (61:209-210). There was very little professional development during these years, as opposed to El Salvador, and only a start during the stabilizing dictatorship of General Carias Andino (1931-1949) (61:211). During this period, the "Aviacon Militar Honduras", Honduran Air Force, was organized and thus effectively pre-dated the formal establishment of the Army, "an almost unique case in world military history and one which accounts for the unusual importance of the Air force in the Honduran military set-up" (46:283). Sporadic civilian-military rule lasted until 1963, when a military coup established martial dominance in Honduran government that lasted 19 years. During these years, the Honduran armed forces improved, and like El Salvador, came under the guidance and support of the U.S. with only minor assistance from the French and Israelis (46:293). Since the 1982 Constitution, the armed forces have taken their place in society as a dominant force with a mission to "defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic, to maintain peace, public order and the integrity of the Constitution, the principle of free elections and regular presidential succession" (61:215).

The rapidly expanding Honduran military is made up of 13,500 Army personnel located in the highlands near the capitol and two newly emerging forces - the tactical "Agrupacion Tactica" and a U.S.-taught Special Forces unit, the "Escuadion Cobra" (46:282-293); a small Navy of 500

being enlarged significantly by the United States on the Pacific Coast; and a fast-growing, already comparatively competent Air Force of 1200 personnel and several types of aircraft (14:280). The armed forces have developed to the extent to "guarantee Honduran sovereignty against anything short of a full-scale Cuban-based invasion" (46:293), which seems unlikely with the growing U.S. presence in the area. Since the treaty of 1982 with El Salvador, and facing no threat from Guatemala, Honduras' only opposition to relative peace is the Nicaraguan-based communist insurgency groups of the Sandinista regime along its southern border.

Continued use of Honduran soil for U.S.-based military activity (as in the Guatemalan coup in 1954, the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, and counterinsurgency into Nicaragua) will probably place Honduras as the principal U.S. military foothold in Central America as the century ends and Panama, current location of U.S. Southern Command Headquarters, takes over "responsibility for the defense of the Panama Canal Zone" (46:471).

### III. Foreign Involvement in the Region 1800-1985

Foreign involvement in the affairs of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras has been a significant factor in the development of northern Central America throughout history. From conquest (1524) until independence (1823), this area was totally dominated by the Spanish. From 1823-1899, Spanish influence subsided and was replaced by that of Great Britain, Germany, France, the United States, as well as Mexico and Guatemala itself. After the coffee and banana trade grew powerful in the early half of the twentieth century, European and North American commercial firms dominated the economics and politics of all Central American nations. Since World War II, the United States has been the most influential foreign power. Recently, regional powers Mexico and Venezuela have attempted to find peaceful solutions for their neighbors' problems, while the Soviet Union and Cuba have been successful doing just the opposite.

This chapter discusses the impact foreign countries have had on this region throughout the past 150 years. Each section discusses the relative interests of the particular country or region from a military and economic viewpoint. Any security assistance that country or region may have rendered or sold in the past will also be discussed.



Sections are arranged somewhat chronologically, i.e., Southern Europe had great influence early and is discussed first, while the Soviet Union and Cuba have only recently become involved in the region and are discussed next to last. The United States and Israel, having the most influence today, are discussed last.

### Southern Europe

The countries of Spain, Italy, and Portugal have had little impact on Central America since 1823, and almost none today. Of course, Spain dominated Central America through the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Guatemala for hundreds of years. Portugal's influence is limited to South America, impacting Central America only through Brazilian policies. Italy has some commercial interests in the region and once sold aircraft and arms to El Salvador.

The lasting impact of Spanish rule, as stated earlier, has been in language, religion, and way of life. After Latin American independence, Spanish presence declined in and had virtually no influence at all on Central American affairs. The military rulers of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were forced to turn to the more powerful nations of northern Europe, for Spain had nothing to offer. The one exception to this was the formation and training of a national guard in El Salvador by the Spanish (46:414).

The only direct Italian influence came during the

height of Italian military power in the 1930s under Mussolini. "During the late 1930s, a number of armoured vehicles, aircraft, and anti-aircraft weapons were supplied by Italy in a direct arms-for-coffee deal" (46:415). There are no items of Italian make currently in the Central American armed forces.

Another southern European nation, Yugoslavia, sold some artillery to El Salvador in the early 1970s, principally the Yugoslav M-56 105mm howitzer (51:E3). However, this was merely an arms sale and resulted in no apparent influence.

According to the Defense Marketing Survey (DMS) Market Intelligence Report, the only weaponry currently in any northern Central American inventory bought from any southern European country are 4 CASA C-101 trainer aircraft. "In October 1984 Spain confirmed that four CASA C-101 aircraft were sold and delivered to Honduras with an option for another four. It is believed the first two were fitted with rockets and bombs" (51:H2).

Economically, the region trades very little with southern European nations, principally agricultural goods (Central America) for manufactured goods (southern Europe). The figures on the next page represent an average of less than 3% of northern Central America's total trade. According to this source, there is no trade of any consequence with Portugal, Greece, Yugoslavia, or any other Mediterranean nation.

<u>Country</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>			<u>Guatemala</u>			<u>Honduras</u>		
Mil \$	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Bal</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Bal</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Bal</u>
Italy	13.0	6.6	+	66.3	12.5	+	11.8	12.2	-
Spain	3.8	11.5	-	1.6	94.6	-	24.6	5.0	+

Source: (6:47-94)

Note that Guatemala has an extremely unfavorable balance of trade with Spain, while all three countries enjoy a relatively favorable balance with Italy. Nevertheless, the numbers are sufficiently low in comparison to the U.S., Japan, and northern Europe as to render southern Europe's economic influence marginal.

All things considered, the current influence on the area from southern Europe is minimal. The only real connections Italy, Spain, and Portugal have with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras today are the common bonds of language similarity and religion.

#### Northern Europe and Japan

The northern Central American countries currently trade with Japan and 12 countries of northern Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK (6:94). In addition, 6 of the northern European countries have sold arms to one or all of the northern Central American countries in the past 25 years: Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Switzerland, and the UK. An indication

of the importance of northern Europe: Guatemala maintains embassies in only 25-35 countries in the world.

Aside from the U.S., Israel, Japan, and the rest of Latin America, only western European countries have true diplomatic relations with Guatemala (60:187).

Historically, Germany, France, and the UK have had the most influence in the area among northern European countries, Germany and France playing an important role in the formation of El Salvador and Guatemala's armed forces. It wasn't until the 1930s that all three countries began turning to the United States for military assistance. On the other hand, northern Europe has had only partial economic influence throughout the past 150 years - an area the United States has totally dominated since the turn of the century.

Second to their diplomatic relations with one another, the Central American states...have been most concerned with Great Britain and - since the 1890s - the United States. Britain won the first skirmishes in the investment and marketing war with the United States, engaging in profitable lending procedures from the early 1820s, the same decade that her merchants moved into Guatemala... More important than Central America's bonds or raw materials, however, was the British strategic concern with the isthmus. By mid century the United States had awakened, ...The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was signed in 1850 and, though deliberately confusing in terms, saved Central America from its British partners...the British gave the Bay Islands back to Honduras in 1859 and unlikely "mosquito kingdom" to Honduras and Nicaragua over a three decade period...British influence lingered elsewhere, especially in Costa Rica and Guatemala ...Today Great Britain retains on the isthmus only her crown colony of British Honduras (48:130).

In Guatemala, fear of neighboring Mexico and aggression towards British Honduras (Belize), El Salvador, and Honduras led to an early formation of a relatively strong army. Spanish officers helped establish the Guatemalan "Escuela Politecnica" in 1873, but the French were predominant throughout the remainder of the century in training the military (60:192). The French established a military mission in Guatemala City and influenced all areas of military doctrine until the 1930s. In 1929, an air corps was established by the French using old French aircraft (46:258). Strangely enough, throughout this same period, the Guatemalans received the majority of their defense material from the Germans. The Mauser rifle was standard issue and the artillery were "equipped with Krupp field and mountain guns" (46:267). As was mentioned in the historical analysis, the decision to support the United States in the second world war was a difficult one for Ubico, considering the years of German security assistance rendered.

El Salvador, long leary of Guatemala, sought foreign assistance even earlier than their northern neighbors. In the 1860s, the French established a military mission and the first military academy in 1867. By the 1890s, like much of Latin America, German influence grew in significance. The Germans established a military mission, an NCO school, and the beginnings of long-lasting defense material support. The German influence continued "second-hand" through the

Chilean military mission, which lasted from 1901 to 1957 (46:406). The Chileans totally influenced Salvadorean military thought, staffing all schools until 1941. "Prusso-Chilean influence remains strong in El Salvador's military traditions, being readily discernible in such outward manifestations as the continued use of the goose-step and the cut of ceremonial uniforms" (46:406). The Salvadoran Air Force was formed in 1922 with the purchase of five Italian aircraft, a few U.S. aircraft in the 1930s, and four more Italian aircraft in 1939, before the outbreak of World War II. It should be noted that El Salvador relied heavily on the French and Danish for arms in the 1920s and 30s, a tradition it continues today.

As discussed in the military analysis, the Honduran army has only recently developed. Most influence has thus been economic and predominantly U.S. However, like its neighbors, Honduras called on northern Europeans to organize its armed forces. The French and Chileans provided some professional training and the Germans provided the bulk of the armaments from 1900-1920. Other arms were sought from Denmark, France, Britain, and Italy in the 1920s and 30s, but ultimately the U.S. became Honduras' prime supplier. Although there have been purchases in the past fifty years from countries such as Yugoslavia, France, Spain, and most recently, Israel, the United States has dominated both the economic and military affairs of Honduras and continues to

do so today.

Economically, West Germany and Japan are major trading partners, and thus have the ability to exert the most influence in that field. As the figures below and in Table II exhibit, these two industrial giants rank behind only the U.S. in trade with northern Central America.

	<u>Exports %</u>	<u>Imports %</u>
El Salvador	U.S. (32%)	U.S. (32%)
	W. Germany (18%)	Guatemala (14%)
	Guatemala (13%)	Japan (11%)
	Netherlands ( 9%)	Venezuela ( 9%)
Guatemala	U.S. (29%)	U.S. (30%)
	W. Germany (12%)	Japan (11%)
	El Salvador (11%)	El Salvador ( 9%)
	Japan ( 7%)	W. Germany ( 8%)
Honduras	U.S. (57%)	U.S. (42%)
	W. Germany (13%)	Japan ( 9%)
	Netherlands ( 5%)	Guatemala ( 6%)
	Guatemala ( 4%)	Venezuela ( 6%)

Source: (2:175)

Guatemala and Honduras enjoy favorable trade balances with most European countries, especially West Germany (as does El Salvador). Obviously, to lose the business of the West Germans, Dutch, Swiss, or Japanese could have a negative effect on these fragile economies, although it must be pointed out that all the industrial countries combined do not export nor import as much into northern Central America as does the United States (6:47-94). Nevertheless, northern Europe and Japan do wield a certain amount of influence based on valued economic positions.

TABLE II

NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICAN TRADE WITH NORTHERN EUROPE  
AND JAPAN

<u>Country</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>		<u>Guatemala</u>		<u>Honduras</u>	
	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>
Austria	13.7	2.5	6.3	3.6	11.2	1.7
Belgium	1.3	5.1	5.5	6.9	10.5	6.8
Denmark	3.4	2.1	9.5	4.1	2.2	1.4
Finland	0	0	16.5	2.6	4.1	0.2
France	7.9	30.8	10.5	23.3	9.2	8.6
W. Germany	137.3	30.1	61.1	61.5	65.3	13.9
Ireland	0.1	4.2	0.6	3.5	0.1	1.0
Japan	20.5	26.6	71.0	51.4	43.1	39.1
Netherlands	7.6	13.2	25.8	8.9	14.7	8.3
Norway	0	0	3.6	1.8	3.8	0.2
Sweden	2.6	10.5	4.5	11.2	8.4	1.8
Switzerland	1.9	6.9	19.7	15.8	18.5	9.1
U.K.	3.2	10.0	21.7	15.7	7.5	9.0

Figures in \$ million; 1983 data.

Source: (6:47-94).



Generally, France and West Germany sell the most arms to northern Central America of any other countries except the United States and Israel. France dominates the aerospace market, Germany and Denmark personal weapons and small ammunition, and the UK, Belgium, and Switzerland have made small sales of various goods. In perspective, the U.S. is by far the major supplier of these countries, as will be discussed later, but France and Israel have made some major sales.

France has sold the following military equipment to El Salvador and Guatemala, according to Defense Marketing Services (51).

El Salvador	3	Aerospatiale CM-170 Trainer Aircraft
	2	Aerospatiale SA-316 Helicopters
	3	Aerospatiale SA-315 Helicopters
	18	AML-90 Armored Cars
	12	ex-Austrian, refurbished AMX-13 Tanks
Guatemala	3	Aerospatiale CM-170 Fighter Aircraft
	3	Aerospatiale CM-170 Trainer Aircraft
	8	ex-Austrian, refurbished AMX-13 Tanks

The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) has sold items to all three countries, to include the following (51).

El Salvador	20	UR-416 Armored Personnel Carriers
	1000s	MP-5 Submachine Guns (standard issue)
	1000s	G3 7.62mm Rifles
Guatemala	4	Fokker F-27 Transport Aircraft

Honduras 1000s 9mm HK MP-5 and MP-5SD Submachine Guns  
1000s 5.56mm Sturm and Ruger Rifles

Denmark has sold the following howitzers and personal weapons to El Salvador and Honduras (51).

El Salvador 100s Madsen-Saetter LMG Howitzers

1000s M-50 Madsen/Dansk Submachine Guns

Honduras 1000s 7mm Madsen LMG Submachine Guns

Belgium has also made small arms sales to Honduras (51).

Honduras 1000s 7.62mm FN MAG Machine Guns

1000s 9mm FW Uzi Belgian Submachine Guns

1000s 7.62mm FN FAL Rifles

The United Kingdom has sold Honduras 16 Scorpion FV-101  
Alvis Ltd Tanks and Switzerland sold Guatemala 24 Pilatus  
PC-7 Turbo Trainer Aircraft (51).

#### Latin America

Throughout their independence, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have been influenced to varying degrees by the Latin American countries of Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Columbia, Argentina, and Chile. Other Central American countries have never been strong enough to exert any real influence, although Nicaragua has been aggressive at times. Economically and militarily, the six listed Latin American countries have been strong in comparison to northern Central America, and even more so

today. But continuing political, economic, and cultural problems in these countries make them unable to wield the same degree of influence as the U.S. and northern Europe. Nevertheless, these countries have been influential at times, and with increasing industrial capability, promise to figure in the future of Central America for years to come.

Mexico certainly has the most reason to be interested in the affairs of these countries solely due to geographical proximity, if nothing else. It has also become a regional power as the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world and an important third world industrial exporter. Yet, in the past, Central American affairs have been a low priority for Mexico. Relations with the U.S. and Europe have been a much more important part of their foreign policy. In recent years, however, Mexican influence and policy towards Central America has become second in importance only to that of the United States. Their policy? "Mexico's political action in Central America has taken three distinct paths in recent years: (1) support for the Sandinist government in Nicaragua; (2) attempts to achieve a negotiated solution to the civil war in El Salvador; and (3) global initiatives in support of mechanisms to relieve tensions in the area and open the way for coexistence among regimes of different kinds" (48:121). The policy towards Nicaragua is in direct conflict with its major trading partner and northern

neighbor, the United States, yet it is an integral part of Mexican policy.

According to the U.S. Secretary General's report on assistance to Nicaragua, between 1979 and 1981, Mexico donated... \$39,509,900, an amount exceeded only by Cuba...As for bilateral loans to Nicaragua in that period, Mexico granted \$72,900,000, exceeded only by Libya (48:121).

President Lopez Portillo has proposed solutions on numerous occasions, having identified what he calls the "three nuclei of conflict in Central America: Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the relations between Cuba and the United States" (53:124). Primarily, Mexico and the Contadora group to which it belongs, advocate peaceful, negotiated solutions to both the Nicaraguan and Salvadorean problems, obviously not supporting the contras. According to the Bipartisan Committee Report: "The four neighboring Contadora countries--Columbia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela--have been active and creative in trying to develop a regional diplomacy that can meet the needs of Central America" (60:121).

The basic problem for Mexico is that it really doesn't have enough influence in the region to effect its policies, given the current interest of the United States and the Soviet Union. Its policy towards El Salvador is in line with the U.S., but it is U.S. security assistance which has made this policy a factor. Mexico cannot match aid to Nicaragua with either the U.S. nor U.S.S.R. and thus, can have no real impact. In addition, Mexicans are worried

about regional dilemmas: "Guatemalan insurgency activity" and continuing migration of Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees across its borders (48:185).

As the figures in Table III show, Mexican trade with northern Central America is one-sided, exporting mostly petroleum products and manufactured goods and importing little. Militarily, Hondurans have historically sought professional training in Mexico, but now their needs are met by the United States.

Chile, as mentioned earlier, exerted strong influence on El Salvador militarily and to some degree in Guatemala and Honduras as a result of their Prussian German link. The Chilean military mission operated in El Salvador for more than half a century, but has no influence in any of these countries today. As Table III shows, Chilean trade is minimal or nonexistent to these countries.

Argentina and Brazil have had significant internal problems in the past and very little interest in Central America. Recently, however, the growth of industry in these countries has resulted in growing arms shipments to third world countries, including Central America. Argentina maintained a military mission in El Salvador in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including 20 Argentine advisors (46:415). Economically, both countries maintain favorable trade balances with Central America, growing as their industrial capability strengthens. Evidence of this fact is

the increasing amount of arms shipments to these three countries. Argentina has sold El Salvador 6,000 FALN-PARA 7.62 rifles; 4,000 FALN-IV 6.62mm rifles; and 2,000 Browning FM 9mm pistols (51). Brazil has sold Guatemala 10 Aerotec T-23 Uirapurus Trainer Aircraft and Honduras 8 Embraer EMB-312 Tucana Trainer Aircraft (51).

Venezuela, by virtue of its size, proximity, and relative wealth has developed its foreign policy in recent years to include Central America as a vital concern. For one, Venezuela is the chief supplier of oil products to Central America, followed by Mexico. Secondly, Venezuela has great strategic interest in the Caribbean Sea shipping lanes, which the countries and navies of Central America border. Finally, unrest in Central America could lead to unrest in neighboring Columbia and eventually spread to Venezuela. Like Columbia, Venezuela is not internally secure by any means.

Although Venezuela provides no arms to these Central American countries, its overwhelmingly favorable trade balance is a very influential factor. In fact, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are almost totally dependent on Venezuela for petroleum products. Like Mexico, however, this influence is not nearly enough to be compared to the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Columbia is a trading partner and member of Contadora, but has very little else to offer in terms of influence.

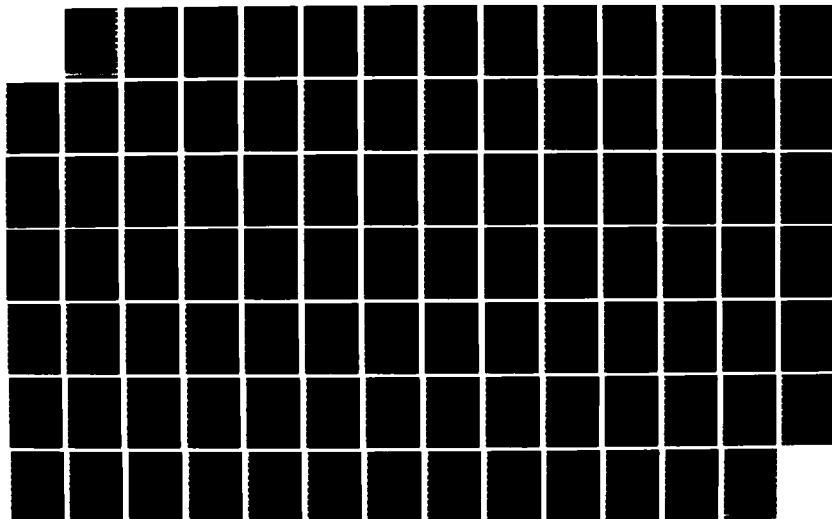
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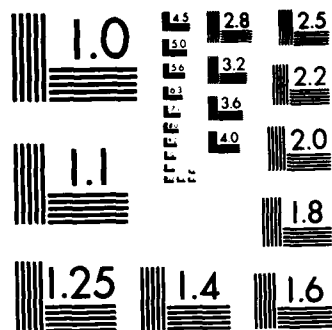
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A



TABLE III  
INTRAREGIONAL TRADE 1977

<u>Country</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>		<u>Guatemala</u>		<u>Honduras</u>	
	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>
Argentina	0	1.7	0.2	0	0	2.3
Brazil	0.1	5.4	0.2	9.3	0	8.3
Columbia	0.1	3.8	0.1	5.0	0.7	3.4
Chile	0	1.4	0	0	0	0
Ecuador	0.1	0.4	1.8	0	0.9	0
Mexico	2.9	18.3	5.5	43.1	0.3	14.2
Peru	0	1.8	0.1	0	0.1	1.0
Venezuela	0	87.5	0	83.9	0	31.2
Costa Rica	52.7	47.3	61.0	54.7	10.1	19.4
El Salvador	--	--	127.6	119.7	0	0
Guatemala	119.7	127.6	--	--	21.6	32.9
Honduras	0	0	32.9	21.6	--	--
Nicaragua	38.4	35.5	52.3	34.7	15.5	18.9
Panama	4.5	25.8	7.2	0	0.4	6.1

Figures in \$ millions.

Source: (63:374-375).

## U.S.S.R. and Cuba

Prior to the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1978-79, neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba had any real influence in the affairs of northern Central America. Neither is a trading partner nor a successful arms merchant to these countries. The Arbenz government in Guatemala from 1950-54 supposedly supported communist ideals, but not as a result of Soviet influence.

The National Bipartisan Committee likens Soviet progress in Nicaragua to that of Cuba twenty years earlier, and predicts dire results for the countries of northern Central America. "The revolution strategy pursued in 1978-79 by Cuba in Nicaragua has since been attempted in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Traditionally splintered insurgent groups were required to unify as a condition for increased Cuban and other Soviet bloc military support" (60:90). For instance:

Guatemala exemplifies Cuba's systematic efforts to unify, assist, and advise Marxist-Leninist guerillas. In the fall of 1980, the four major Guatemalan guerilla groups met in Managua to negotiate a unity agreement...Later last fall, the leadership of the four Guatemalan guerilla organizations were called to Havana to work further on developing effective unity" (4:465).

"A similar process appears underway in Honduras. The Cubans are currently using Honduran leftists to transport arms and provide support to insurgents in El Salvador and Guatemala. Nevertheless, the Cubans are looking to the day

when guerilla warfare can be initiated in Honduras itself" (4:466). These developments underscore the increasing influence of Cuba and the Soviet Union in northern Central America, although not directly through trade or arms sales to governments. Nevertheless, it is real influence. According to the National Bipartisan Commission:

All this makes Cuba no less than the second military power in Latin America after Brazil, a country with twelve times Cuba's population... Cuba's island geography complicates its sponsorship of subversion. But Nicaragua suffers no such limitation. From there, men and material destined for El Salvador can be transported overland through remote areas by routes that are almost impossible to patrol on a constant basis.. As a mainland platform, therefore, Nicaragua is a crucial stepping stone for Cuban and Soviet efforts to promote armed insurgency in Central America. Its location explains why the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979, like the Cuban revolution 20 years earlier, was a decisive turning point in the affairs of the region. With the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the levels of violence and counter-violence in Central America rapidly increased, engulfing the entire region (60:91).

### Israel

As a staunch ally of the United States, Israel has no interest in Central America contrary to U.S. policy. Israel does trade with Central America for one commodity: arms. The rising Israeli capability to produce quality military hardware has found fertile ground in Central America, especially in those countries threatened by Nicaragua. In addition, the Carter administration's arms embargo of

Guatemala and El Salvador in the seventies opened a gap quickly filled by France and Israel. Today numerous arms of Israeli origin can be found in the forces of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, as can be seen in Table IV.

#### United States

No country influences El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras as does the United States. From 1860-1890, U.S. interest was minimal and centered mostly around a growing foreign policy - the Monroe Doctrine. With the advent of the prosperous fruit trade in the 1890s, U.S. commercial interests soared.

During the first half of the twentieth century the Honduran economy was so dominated by the United Fruit Company and the Standard Fruit Company that company managers were frequently perceived as exercising as much power as the Honduran president (63:3).

El Salvador and Guatemala were not exposed to as much U.S. influence during that same era, primarily because France and Germany had equal commercial interests and significant military presence.

U.S. interest and direct influence in the area can be traced to the first real act of security assistance, that occurring in 1907.

The increased presence of the United States in the Caribbean following the Spanish-American War, the decision to build a canal through Panama, and the expanded commercial activities of United States companies all led to a more active role (63:20).

Resisting an invasion from Guatemala in 1906, General Manuel

TABLE IV

ISRAELI ARMS IN NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICAN FORCES

El Salvador

18	ex-Israeli AF Dassault Ouragan fighter aircraft
4	ex-Israeli AF Dassault Super Mystere B-2 fighters
6	ex-Israeli AF IAI CM-170 Magister fighters
4	IAI 201 Arava transport aircraft
200	UZI 9mm submachine guns
200	80mm anti-tank rockets

Guatemala

unknown	upcoming sale of IAI Kfir C-2 fighter aircraft
11	IAI 201 Arava transport aircraft
10-25	RBV-1 Mk 1 APC fighting vehicles
20,000	5.56mm Galil assault rifles
1000s	9mm UZI submachine guns

Honduras

16	ex-Israeli AF Dassault Super Mystere B2 fighters
2	IAI 201 Arava de Havilland -7 transport aircraft
2	IAI Westwind transport aircraft
unknown	Shafir Mk 2 air-to-air missiles
14	RBV Mk 1 armored cars
100s	9mm IMI Mini UZI submachine guns
9	106mm recoilless rifles
unknown	4.2in mortars
10	107mm mortars
16	160mm mortars
1	ATC, EL/M 2205 & UPX-27A Radar

Source: 51

Bonilla could not defeat Nicaraguan forces led by President Zelaya and was overthrown. The U.S., distrusting Zelaya's aggressiveness, sent in the U.S. Marines in 1907, who "landed at Puerto Cortes, the center of the Honduran banana trade, to protect North American interests in the area" (63:20). Although the Marines brought some semblance of order to the country, a plot by Nicaragua and El Salvador to topple Honduras again resulted in the U.S. calling the five Central American presidents (Panama not included) to the Central American Peace Conference in 1907. The U.S. again interceded in Honduran affairs in 1911 during a civil conflict, "bringing both sides to a conference on one of its warships" (63:22). Several more times between 1911 and 1920, the U.S. saw fit to use military force to control violence and protect its commercial interests.

U.S. influence in Honduran affairs continued. "From 1920 through 1923 there were 17 uprisings or attempted coups in Honduras...In August 1922 the presidents of Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador were summoned to a meeting on the U.S.S. Tacoma in the Gulf of Fonseca...the presidents pledged to prevent their territory from being used to promote revolutions against their neighbors and issued a call for a general meeting...in Washington...concluded in February with the adoption of the General Treaty of Peace and Amity of 1923" (63:24). Peace in Honduras was short-lived, however, and upon general disorder, U.S. Marines from

the U.S.S. Denver and several other U.S. naval vessels were sent in to restore order. The election of Tiburcio Caria Andino led to a 22 year dictatorship in 1932 and relative stability - an event the U.S. was more than willing to support.

The dictatorships in each country in the 1930s led to relative stability and increasing U.S. support. El Salvador continued to receive training, materials, and support from Germany and Chile. General Ubico of Guatemala turned to the United States completely for military assistance, forsaking long-standing reliance upon the Germans and French. "From 1935 onwards, US influence began to make itself strongly felt in the Guatemalan Army with the appointment of a US Army officer as director of the National Military Academy, with explicit instructions from the dictator Ubico to transform the establishment into a Central American version of West Point" (45:258). After Pearl Harbor, Ubico invited the U.S. to use its ports in return for relatively massive security assistance - outfitting the entire army (6,000) with equipment, tanks, trainer aircraft, and more (46:258).

U.S. security assistance in the form of material began for Honduras with Lend-Lease in the 1940s and for all three countries with the signing of the Rio Treaty (Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance) in 1947. From that point on, all three countries have developed extremely close military ties with the U.S., mostly based around U.S.

security assistance programs. For instance, as a result of Guatemala's signing the Rio Treaty, it received "ten M3A1 Stuart light tanks, eight M8 Greyhound armored cars, six M3A1 White scout cars and ten M2 half-track APCs, in addition to some M116 75mm and twelve M101 105mm howitzers" (46:258). The Honduran Army was still too primitive to receive much equipment, but as the U.S. trained it, Honduras received "15 T17 Staghound armored cars...in 1951, 15 M3A1 White scout cars in 1952, and 10 M24 light tanks in 1954-55...The Air Force (Fuerza Aerea) received...five Bell P-63 Kingcobra and seven Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighters,...a single Martin B-26 Marauder bomber,...a dozen...Beech C-45 light transports" (46:290) and eventually 16 C-47 transports. El Salvador received very little material support, even after replacing its Chilean military mission with a U.S. one in 1957.

It is noteworthy that both the superior Honduran Air Force and the Salvadorean Air Force were completely outfitted with U.S. craft in the 1969 "Football War". "Honduras had Central America's best air force with eleven F4U-4 and F4U-5 Corsair fighter-bombers, three RT-33As and about a dozen T-6 and T-28 armed trainers, plus a transport force with at least six C-54 and C-47s...opposed by a Salvadorean force of five F4U Corsairs and five F-51 Mustangs plus four C-47 transports and about half-a-dozen armed T-6 trainers" (46:290).



With the exception of President Arbenz' order of a "reported 2,000 tons of Czech arms" (46:258) in 1953, Guatemala had received the vast majority of U.S. security assistance to these three countries prior to 1980 (Figure 3-1). Much of the reason for this was the general internal dissent in Guatemala throughout the 1960s and 1970s. For a brief period from 1978-1980, human rights violations in Guatemala resulted in a U.S. arms embargo, and from this time on, the Guatemalans have bought the majority of their arms from Israel. Still, 75-80% of the arms in each country are U.S.-made, as will be shown more extensively in later chapters.

From a trading viewpoint, the U.S. is as dominant as it is militarily, accounting for 30-60% of all Central American exports and imports and 50-90% of trade outside Latin America.

	<u>El Salvador</u>		<u>Guatemala</u>		<u>Honduras</u>	
<u>Region</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Imp</u>
United States	302.8	320.9	331.5	428.9	386.9	302.1
Canada	16.8	12.5	18.6	29.9	22.9	13.5
Europe & Japan	233.9	252.5	343.7	348.6	258.7	131.8
Latin America	3.2	120.4	7.9	141.3	2.0	60.4
Central America	215.3	236.2	281.0	230.7	47.6	76.8

Source: (6:47-94)

TABLE V

U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA  
1950-1980

FOREIGN MILITARY SALES

<u>Years</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Guatemala</u>	<u>Honduras</u>
1950-1970	1,464,000	3,069,000	1,092,000
1971	2,000	7,764,000	0
1972	500	1,953,000	27,000
1973	52,000	3,342,000	5,232,000
1974	385,000	740,000	706,000
1975	411,000	938,000	303,000
1976	848,000	3,496,000	597,000
1977	229,000	6,449,000	811,000
1978	29,000	2,595,000	647,000
1979	500	1,881,000	258,000
1980	2,517,000	11,000	5,045,000
1950-1980	5,938,000	32,238,000	14,718,000

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

<u>Years</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Guatemala</u>	<u>Honduras</u>
1950-1970	3,310,000	11,443,000	3,977,000
1971	245,000	635,000	384,000
1972	200,000	458,000	172,000
1973	90,000	1,401,000	188,000
1974	33,000	1,539,000	101,000
1975	50,000	260,000	78,000
1976	451,000	280,000	134,000
1977	111,000	104,000	247,000
1978	125,000	46,000	234,000
1979	51,000	1,000	52,000
1980	172,000	71,000	49,000
1950-1980	4,837,000	16,237,000	5,616,000

Source: (17:1-25)

In summary, U.S. influence in northern Central America has been strong, especially when the U.S. has chosen to use force. Security assistance to each country has meant the bulk of whatever equipment they have had to work with. The U.S. has been concerned with the internal affairs of each country, but mostly only to the degree these affairs have affected U.S. commercial interests.

Table V depicts foreign influence in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras over history. As seat of the only U.S. diplomatic center in northern Central America prior to 1900, Guatemala received a moderate amount of U.S. influence, mostly regional. From 1900-1930, for reasons discussed, Honduras was influenced to a great degree by the U.S. El Salvador continued to be influenced by Europeans (Germans, French) and Chileans. From 1930-1960, General Ubico and the Jacobo Arbenz' policies resulted in U.S. involvement in Guatemala. From 1960-1980, U.S. involvement increased in each country as a result of such incidences as the Salvadorean-Honduran war of 1969 and guerilla warfare in Guatemala throughout the entire period. Beginning with the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1978, U.S. influence has increased dramatically in El Salvador and Honduras, as will be discussed. Although the arms embargo slowed U.S.-Guatemalan relations, continued security assistance under the Reagan administration has once again made U.S. influence dominant in the region.

TABLE VI

FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, AND HONDURASForeign Influence

<u>Period</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Guatemala</u>	<u>Honduras</u>
1823-1900	Spain France	England France Germany	England Spain
1900-1930	Germany Chile France Italy	Germany France U.S.	U.S. Germany France Chile
1930-1960	Chile U.S.	U.S. Mexico	U.S.
1960-1980	U.S.	U.S.	U.S.
1980-1986	U.S. Cuba	U.S. Mexico Cuba	U.S. Cuba

Degree of U.S. Influence

<u>Period</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Guatemala</u>	<u>Honduras</u>
1823-1900	low	moderate	low
1900-1930	low	moderate	high
1930-1960	low	high	moderate
1960-1980	moderate	high	moderate
1980-1986	high	moderate	high

Sources: 3,46,56,59

This chapter explored world influence since independence and found the region to be reliant on foreign powers for much of its needs and 100% of its military equipment and training. Mexico is a strong regional influence and Venezuela has important trade connections. However, only the United States has the power to direct the course of political events in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras today. The one exception to that is Cuba as sponsored by the U.S.S.R., who has an indirect, but significant impact on northern Central American life. Beginning with the next chapter, the impact of U.S. involvement in these three countries since 1980 will be discussed at length.

#### IV. U.S. Involvement in El Salvador Since 1980

##### Objectives and Policy

Stated U.S. objectives and policy for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are officially presented in the Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs Current Policy and Special Report publications. These publications normally reiterate public addresses by the President or senior members of the Department of State or Department of Defense. For this thesis, articles on Central America from editions 655 through 805 of Current Policy and editions 124 through 142 of Special Report are used to describe stated U.S. objectives. These articles cover a period from January 1985 through March 1986.

From a broad perspective, the overall stated objective of the United States in Central America is the promotion of democracy and the confrontation of terrorism and subversion that threaten democracy. Secretary of State Shultz pointed this out in a statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on 5 Feb, 1986.

A few years ago, critics of Central America and U.S. policy towards that region were skeptical democracy could gain support in an environment where history and economic hardship seemed to impose such burdens. They are less skeptical now...The most immediate danger to democracy in Central America, of course, is the assault on it from communist Nicaragua, aided by Cuba and the Soviet Union. Democratic El Salvador is an outstanding example of a country that has managed to withstand a communist insurgency, and we have been privileged to play a part by our encouragement and help (28:1).

In more direct terms, the State Department lists five major goals of U.S. policy in El Salvador, based on traditionally cordial U.S.-Salvadoran relations. Much of this policy is based on support of President Duarte's effort to secure democracy and thwart guerrilla warfare in his country. Stated U.S. policy in El Salvador is to:

1. Support the Salvadoran Government in its effort to build democratic institutions and improve the human rights situation;
2. Assist the Salvadoran Government to ensure the climate of security necessary for economic growth and the further development of the democratic process;
3. Support the government in its effort to bring the extreme elements of the left into the political process;
4. Help the Salvadoran Government establish the basis for sustained economic recovery and growth while helping to provide basic services to those who have fled their homes to avoid the armed conflict; and
5. Encourage the Salvadoran Government to bring to justice those responsible for the murders of American citizens in El Salvador (21:8).

The recent shift in U.S. policy towards El Salvador is evident in a comparison of the first goal as stated above and the first goal as stated in 1981, for example. The goal in 1981 was to "maintain friendly and mutually beneficial

relations with El Salvador" as opposed to today's support for building democracy. This shift exemplifies an interest in the political situation as opposed to a historical concern in the commercial sector, a shift which characterizes the Reagan administration and is primarily a result of the left-wing threat posed by Sandinista Nicaragua.

The second and third goals of support for security and political harmony are driven by the U.S. security assistance program. Security Assistance is discussed at length in the second section of this chapter.

The fourth objective, sustained economic recovery, is a concern for the United States because it is a problem that has lingered for some time without solution and can undermine the new democracy if not solved. Secretary Shultz states that "We have broad bipartisan agreement...on the underlying economic and social causes of instability in Central America. In the past 4 years, 77% of our aid to the region has been economic, not military" (34:2). President Reagan recognized the magnitude of economic problems in the area in an address on 24 February 1982.

...these countries are under economic siege.  
...This economic disaster is consuming our neighbors' money, reserves, and credit, forcing thousands of people to leave for other countries - for the United States, often illegally - and shaking even the most established democracies. And economic disaster has provided a fresh opening to the enemies of freedom, national independence, and peaceful development (37:5).



Nowhere is this more evident than in El Salvador, as was outlined in the economic analysis. Aid from the Economic Support Fund has grown from \$9.1 million in 1980 to a proposed \$240 million for FY 1987 (53:47). Ambassador Richard T. Mc Cormack, U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS), outlined U.S. economic policy in an address before the Central American Forum in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on 23 October, 1985.

Our participation in economic programs in Central America was \$625 million in 1983. The program increased by almost 50% to \$892 million in 1985, and almost \$1 billion is requested for 1986. In current dollars, then, we are planning to assist in Central America with the same amount we provided for the Alliance for Progress in the 1960s. That is a major undertaking for the United States. The broad strategy is: First, to arrest the declines in incomes, employment, and economic activity...Second, to lay the foundation for long-term economic growth...Third, to assure the widest possible distribution of the benefits of growth...;and Fourth, to support democratic processes and institutions through assistance... (33:1).

The fifth State Department goal, that of bringing justice to murderers of U.S. citizens, is designed to "clean-up" the Salvadoran military itself and, more pointedly, deflating the leftist guerrilla movement. This movement is the true catalyst of American aid to El Salvador, whether stated or unstated. The State Department lends credence to this point in its Special Report "Revolution Beyond Our Borders: Sandinista Intervention in Central America". According to this article "before the Sandinista Directorate took power in Managua, there were

guerrillas in El Salvador but no guerrilla war. Extremist forces of El Salvador's left were violent but fragmented into competing factions" (35:5).

As in other Central American countries, the Soviet and Cuban-supported Sandinistas brought these factions together. In December 1979, a meeting was held in Havana which produced agreement among Cayetano Carpio's Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCES), the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), and the Central American Revolutionary Worker's Party (PRTC) to form the one cohesive organization Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Arms were smuggled in originally from the Communist parties in Panama, Costa Rica, and Honduras with Nicaragua as the base of activity. In 1980, upon Soviet suggestion, Salvadoran Communist Party leader Jorge Shafik Handal sought arms from the Vietnamese Communist Party and received "60 tons of arms - overwhelmingly of U.S. manufacture, including 1,620 M-16 automatic rifles with 1,500,000 rounds of ammunition, enough to equip an entire combat infantry battalion" (35:6). Shipments from Cuba and Nicaragua soon bolstered the guerrilla effort and by 1980, El Salvador was under siege - "the Final Offensive". On 10 January, 1981, guerrilla units struck 40-50 locations, radio stations, and demanded the assassination of President Duarte. Although the Salvadoran army held together until U.S. assistance

began arriving in 1982, by 1983 the guerrillas had made life in El Salvador unbearable. "Guerrilla actions had destroyed 55 of the country's 260 bridges,...112 water facilities,... 249 attacks on the telephone system,...200 buses,...and caused over 5,000 interruptions of electrical power - an average of almost eight a day" (35:10).

However, 1983 was the peak of guerrilla resistance in El Salvador. U.S. security assistance grew to massive levels by 1984 and have continued since, bringing about a reduction in the success of the Nicaraguan-supported guerrillas. It is not unreasonable to say, then, that U.S. security assistance is the prime supporter of U.S. stated policy in El Salvador since 1980 (or more precisely, 1982). The development of the democratic process, an effective security system, and economic recovery in El Salvador hinge directly on continued security assistance by the United States; there are few that can reasonably argue this point.

#### Security Assistance

According to the FY 1987 Congressional Presentation for Security Assistance Programs, the U.S. has traditionally upheld two goals of security assistance strategy:

- to build coalition defenses against Soviet-inspired or other threats to U.S. global and regional interests; and
- to enhance regional stability and contain regional conflicts by helping friends and allies to defend themselves (16:31).

From these two overriding objectives of security assistance, the U.S. Department of State has derived six separate objectives for our security assistance programs:

1. Promote Middle East Peace;
2. Enhance Cooperative Defense and Security;
3. Deter and Combat Aggression;
4. Promote Regional Stability;
5. Promote Key Interests through FMS Cash Sales and Commercial Exports; and
6. Promote Professional Military Relationships through Grant Training (16:31).

For FY 87, nine countries will receive assistance to deter and combat aggression: Chad, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Korea, Pakistan, Thailand, Tunisia, and Yemen, totaling \$1,767,600,000 among them. Of this total, \$708,400,000 is allocated to the three countries bordering Nicaragua: Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras. El Salvador is to receive \$376,250,000 in security assistance (16:1-10).

U.S. policy seeks to protect our hemispheric interests and address the socio-political causes of the insurgency by (1) assisting the democratic government of El Salvador to defend itself against a Marxist insurgency supported by Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviet bloc; (2) supporting further democratic consolidation, respect for human rights, and responsive public institutions; and (3) helping stabilize the war-torn national economy and install needed adjustments to encourage growth. U.S. security assistance provides training and material to help the Salvadoran armed forces meet the insurgent threat and to promote professionalism, respect for human rights, self-defense capabilities, discipline under elected civilian leaders, and concern for civilians caught up in the conflict. U.S. economic aid seeks to augment private investment, support vital public services, and permit necessary imports for production and consumption (16:40).

As Table VII shows, U.S. security assistance has risen steadily since 1980. The only program showing a decrease is the FMS Financing Program, which is estimated at 0 for 1986 and projected the same for 1987. However, in its place, the U.S. has granted \$125 million in MAP funds for 1986 and projected \$134 million for 1987, as opposed to \$172,000 in 1980. FMS has increased over this seven year period from \$2,294 to \$150 million; Commercial Sales from \$207,000 to \$5 million; Economic Support Fund from \$9,100 to \$240 million; and IMET from \$247,000 to \$1.6 million.

Evidence of these figures can be seen in the relative magnitude of U.S.-manufactured weaponry in the Salvadoran armed forces arsenal, as shown in Table VIII. According to the FY 87 CPD, more is on the way, to include such major procurement items as UH-1H and Hughes 500 helicopters, O-2 A/B, A-37, and training aircraft, and naval patrol aircraft - all granted under the MAP program. FMS includes additional major procurement items.

As justification for these amounts, the CPD states the following "Policy Goals" for security assistance to El Salvador:

- Deter and combat aggression
- Reduce and eliminate terrorism
- Help the democratic Salvadoran government defend itself against anti-democratic insurgency
- Foreclose military victory to insurgents to bring them into democratic process
- Support consolidation of constitutional process
- Promote political, social and economic progress and respect for human rights
- Maintain production and employment (16:46)

TABLE VII

U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR 1980-1987

<u>Year</u>	<u>Foreign Military Sales</u>	<u>Commercial Sales</u>
1980	2,294,000	207,000
1981	10,270,000	17,000
1982	16,716,000	300,000
1983	67,544,000	200,000
1984	145,344,000	1,115,000
1985	146,002,000	2,196,000
1986 (est)	150,000,000	5,000,000
1987 (pro)	150,000,000	5,000,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>FMS Financing</u>	<u>Economic Support Fund</u>
1980	5,700,000	9,100,000
1981	10,000,000	44,900,000
1982	16,500,000	115,000,000
1983	16,500,000	140,000,000
1984	30,000,000	249,000,000
1985	10,000,000	285,000,000
1986 (est)	0	177,045,000
1987 (pro)	0	240,000,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>IMET</u>	<u>Military Assistance Program</u>
1980	247,000	172,000
1981	492,000	25,003,000
1982	2,002,000	63,500,000
1983	1,300,000	56,000,000
1984	1,300,000	97,000,000
1985	1,500,000	134,750,000
1986 (est)	1,435,000	125,367,000
1987 (pro)	1,600,000	134,650,000

All figures in U.S. dollars

Sources: (16:82-87; 17:1-25)

In order to carry out these policy goals, the State Department lists the following Program Objectives:

- Sustain higher level of Salvadoran armed forces operations against the insurgent threat
- Support armed forces through training and equipment improvements
- Confront new insurgent tactics of small-unit operations and increased urban and rural terrorism
- Help strengthen economy and promote private sector-led growth (16:31).

To fully understand the magnitude of the importance the United States places on deterring aggression in El Salvador, consider that this country of less than five million people is receiving \$376 million in U.S. security assistance, or roughly \$75 per person. Of every country in the world receiving security assistance from the United States, only six countries will receive more assistance in 1987 than El Salvador; over 100 countries will receive less.

<u>Country</u>	<u>ESF</u>	<u>FMS *</u>	<u>FMS **</u>	<u>MAP</u>	<u>IMET</u>	<u>Total</u>
Israel	1200	0	1800	0	0	3,000
Egypt	815	0	1300	0	2	2,117
Turkey	150	145	455	220	4	974
Pakistan	250	340	0	0	1	591
Greece	0	500	0	0	2	501
Spain	12	400	0	0	3	415
El Salvador	240	0	0	134	2	376

Note: All figures in \$ million.

\* FMS financed at U.S. Treasury rate

\*\* FMS financed at Concessional rate

Source: (16:1-10)

Turkey and El Salvador are the only two countries in the world receiving over \$100 million in MAP grant assistance. El Salvador is also among the top four in

# TABLE VIII

## U.S. ARMS IN EL SALVADOR'S ARMED FORCES

### Air Force

17	ex-USAF Cessna A-37B Dragonfly fighter aircraft
10	ex-USAF Cessna O-2A Skymaster observation craft
3	Beech T-34A Mentor trainer aircraft
4	Cessna T-41C Mexcalero trainer aircraft
6-10	Rockwell T-6 Texan trainer aircraft
8	Rockwell T-28 Trojan trainer aircraft
2	Fairchild C-123K Provider transport aircraft
1	Lockheed C-130 Hercules transport aircraft
12-17	McDonnell Douglas C-47 transport aircraft
2	McDonnell Douglas DC-6B transport aircraft
1	McDonnell Douglas C-118 transport aircraft
40	Bell UH1-H Iroquois helicopters
1	Fairchild Hiller FH-1100 helicopter
4	Hughes 500 helicopters

### Navy

1	Stewart type patrol boat
3	Camcraft type patrol boats
1	Commercial cruiser class patrol boat

### Army

30	M-102 105mm Howitzers
6	M114 155mm Howitzers
unknown	M-60 machine guns
unknown	M-14A1 7.62mm rifles
unknown	M-16A1 5.56mm rifles
2,000	40mm anti-tank rocket grenades
5,000	grenade launcher cartridges
unknown	M79 grenade launchers
unknown	M203 grenade launchers
100s	AN/PRC-77 field radios

Source: (51:El Salvador)



receiving economic support and receives as much IMET per person as any country in the world. This is many times more assistance in one year than El Salvador received in total from 1950-1980. Obviously, the Reagan administration takes the Communist threat from Nicaragua very seriously, especially in the case of threatened El Salvador.

#### Important Events

This section outlines those events which have shaped the circumstances leading up to the current situation in El Salvador that requires such massive assistance from the United States.

As early as January 1980, events in El Salvador showed the need for some stabilizing force. A military junta of young officers dissolved when three civilian members resigned and threw the country into chaos. Guerrilla activity from the left and death squad terror from the extreme right intensified for two years, resulting in thousands of deaths and assassinations. It was during this chaotic phase that the Communist bloc began supporting the guerrilla movement under the combined leadership of FMLN.

In the last months preceding Jose Napoleon Duarte's election, the conflict increased into a civil war. Deaths of foreign embassy personnel, missionaries, and disappearances of several hundred civilians placed the Reagan administration in a quandry - both sides seemed to be

guilty of human rights violations. Heavy voter turnout probably turned the tide, although Christian Democratic Duarte only received 41% of the vote and 24 of 60 seats in the constituent assembly (3:236).

Promises by Duarte to seek peaceful solutions to the war and end civilian slaughter resulted in increased U.S. support and assistance, although the war with the FMLN increased in intensity and violence throughout the year as a result of continued Nicaraguan-Cuban-Soviet assistance. By August, over 3,000 government troops had been killed for the previous 12 month period (8:349). Reports showed that guerrilla warfare had caused \$41.5 million in damages from September 1980 to May 1982 (9:92) and were on the increase. On the bright side, a Human Rights Commission had been formed and several people were brought to trial for the deaths of U.S. missionaries and churchwomen, among others. The government gained support from the populace for these actions, and, perhaps more importantly, the United States.

Through the early months of 1983, the war intensified as the guerrillas gained strength and the government received security assistance from the U.S.: 2292 government troops had been killed in the previous year (9:349). Several large cities came under siege during the year and, although new elections were scheduled for early 1984, prospects for a settlement to the war looked grim. Guerrillas and government representatives met for talks in

Bogota, Columbia; however, government officials said that talks would not continue until the guerrillas agreed to talk about taking part in the elections (9:396).

In January 1984, the National Bipartisan Commission released its report and thus outlined U.S. policy in the region for years to come. A large part of this report dealt with the necessity for increased economic support, which has taken place, but it also pointed out that the Salvadoran government must get the upper hand on the leftists, as well as the human rights problems. Throughout the year, there was tremendous conflict in the United States among those who favored continued assistance to the government of El Salvador to offset the now obvious Soviet support for the leftists and those who rejected continued assistance as a result of the continuous human rights abuses of the Salvadoran government. Duarte's stand throughout the year was that he would not meet with guerrilla leaders again until they became part of the peace process (11:92).

1985 was a year of continuing tragedy: three U.S. marines were killed in June and the daughter of President Duarte was kidnapped in September, among other atrocities. Continued massive U.S. assistance throughout the year resulted in guerrilla leadership being driven from the country and on 25 December, "the government agreed to a guerrilla-proposed 10-day cease-fire, the longest cease-fire of the 6 year-old war" (12:91). In 1985, the government

reported 1683 government soldiers were killed as opposed to 1034 guerrillas (P3:140), somewhat of a de-escalation from previous years.

In 1986, attention has shifted from the civil war in El Salvador, which continues, to aid for the Nicaraguan "contras" - counter-revolutionaries based in Honduras and Costa Rica. Nevertheless, problems continue for El Salvador. Speculation is made in a NACLA's Report on the Americas magazine article titled "Whitewashing Duarte" that the U.S. Administration, Congress, and press have presented 1985 as a year in which there were great advances by the Salvadoran government. Government abuses have been downplayed while the ineptness and shift in guerrilla strategy have taken the forefront in the press, according to this article. A more in-depth article in the same magazine, titled "Duarte: Prisoner of War", is a thorough study of the present situation by scholars from El Salvador's Central American University. This article concludes "that Duarte is the largely powerless victim of forces beyond his control; his unwillingness or inability to challenge the veto power of the armed forces, the private sector and the U.S. embassy has left him prisoner of the Reagan Administration's war" (42:1). These scholars conclude that Duarte is unable to make any dent in the three "circles" that bind him from effective leadership: 1) the United States, whose influence and money has bought a manageable, "low-intensity conflict"

for Washington and calamity for El Salvador; 2) the armed forces, now 52,00 strong and well-equipped, who are fighting a war of attrition over which Duarte has no control; and 3) the FMLN, equipped by the Soviet-bloc, who have declared the Duarte government "the central target in its strategy of total war" (42:1-31).

Exactly what is happening in El Salvador? Should U.S. security assistance continue, and to what degree? In the final section of this chapter, a summation of the various points of view will be represented for discussion in the final chapter of this thesis.

#### Forecasts and Viewpoints

Opinion varies on the subject of security assistance to El Salvador among three major views: 1) that current assistance is necessary and adequate to meet U.S. policy and El Salvador's needs; 2) that assistance to the 'corrupt' or 'feeble' Duarte government is wasteful; or 3) that the economic/military mix of assistance is inappropriate.

Generally, the U.S. State Department and the Department of Defense adhere to the viewpoint that current assistance is necessary and adequate, as has been pointed out previously. The point could be argued that despite this massive assistance for the past four years, the guerrillas still exist and the war continues.

Those adhering to the view that assistance to the Duarte government is wasteful are few. Obviously, the FMLN feels the Duarte government is either corrupt or non-representative of the people. The scholars who wrote the article "Duarte: Prisoner of War" stress that the government is feeble and unable to manage these massive funds from the United States. Generally, however, most Salvadorans and North Americans agree that military and economic assistance is necessary.

The view many take is that the economic/military mix of assistance is inappropriate. In the minority on this viewpoint are the far right who feel even more military assistance is needed to off-set the threat. The vast majority disagreeing with U.S. policy feel more economic aid is needed, this group leaning politically more to the left. Discussions with instructors at the University of Louisville's history, geography, and political science departments underscored this view. Despite varying opinions on the cure, each felt U.S. attempts to solve the Salvadoran dilemma from the top-down (militarily) as opposed to the grass-roots-up (economically) was in error. Most felt some degree of military assistance was needed, but in much less quantity. The object should be to bring El Salvador peace, democracy, and competitive trade -- not military power and domination over its peoples.

There is some merit to each of these viewpoints, as summed up by the following arguments.

1. Without U.S. security assistance to El Salvador since 1982, there is little chance there would be a democracy today and even greater probability that U.S. influence in the region would be severely diminished. However, continued abuses of the political system, military aid, and the populace by military leaders lend credence to the argument that this country is not yet able to handle large sums of money and assistance.

2. Without economic aid under the U.S. security assistance program, the Salvadoran economy could certainly have collapsed, giving the guerrilla movement additional impetus. On the other hand, the mismanagement of this very assistance by the government, as evidenced by the large amounts falling into FMLN hands, indicates at the very least that massive economic assistance does not always reach those for whom it is intended.

3. Continued U.S. military assistance intensifies the militarization of the region and fuels the conflict. Of course, U.S.S.R. and Cuban assistance to Nicaragua also adds to this problem. From the Contadora viewpoint, this super-power confrontation has turned a basic Latin American struggle into an East-West conflict. However, many Salvadorans fear the large Nicaraguan threat as well as the lingering fear of aggressive-natured Guatemala and

adversarial Honduras, welcoming the added security that U.S. assistance brings.

The bottom line is that current U.S. policy places much significance on Central American affairs and security assistance is a key element of this policy. In 1986, the "Contra" aid issue has diverted the public attention from the civil war in El Salvador, and made it seem as if the conflict had ended. Continued assistance could make this a reality, but with the change of administrations looming on the horizon, Salvadorans are certainly apprehensive of the future.



## V. U.S. Involvement in Guatemala Since 1980

### Objectives and Policy

Strains between the United States and Guatemala since the late 1970s have altered U.S. policy from one of relatively unconditional support for the government to one of cautious support for regional stability and the furtherance of democracy. According to Langhorne Motley, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, in a statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 5 March 1985:

We are encouraged by developments in Guatemala. The government has announced that national elections will be held...and it is generally accepted in all sectors in Guatemala that the elections this year will follow an even more competitive pattern (than in 1984). These elections represent a development of fundamental importance to all Guatemalans, and represent clearly the positive trends in Central America which effectively serve U.S. interest. Problems still exist in the observance of human rights, but...significant improvements have taken place (19:8).

Since Guatemala does not face the same immediate threat that El Salvador, Costa Rica, or Honduras face from bordering Nicaragua, U.S. emphasis has been one of support for strengthened democratic processes and a resulting stronger regional security. The State Department's six

major foreign policy goals for Guatemala, as listed below, are quite different from those in El Salvador or Honduras, reflecting a "wait-and-see" attitude of the United States.

The United States:

- Desires to sustain these relations through continuing dialogue and negotiation of any issues of potential conflict;
- Wishes to help Guatemala achieve its full developmental potential, especially improved living and health standards among the rural poor;
- Encourages Guatemalan respect for human rights;
- Hopes Central American integration will continue and supports regional peace efforts;
- Strives to maintain mutually beneficial trade relations; and
- Supports a solution of the Belize dispute acceptable to the parties involved (22:6).

These points obviously reflect the great rift that developed between the United States and Guatemala during the Carter years. Although relations between U.S. and Guatemala were previously categorized as "good", there really hasn't been good feeling towards the U.S. among Guatemala's citizens since the 1954 CIA operation. Even though U.S. assistance to Guatemala was greater than El Salvador and Honduras combined from 1950-1970 (Table V), Guatemalans are hardly grateful. Certainly, the tremendous amount of guerrilla warfare and terrorism that have taken place for the past 20 years indicate a divided nation and one less likely to respond favorably to U.S. support.

The National Bipartisan Commission took note of these problems, recognizing that our relations with Guatemala are far more distant than those with El Salvador, Honduras, and

Costa Rica within Central America. "Attitudes in the politically powerful officer corps have been characterized by strong nationalism and resentment over perceived U.S. interventionism in the country's internal affairs, ranging from the Arbenz episode and the use in the early 1960s of Guatemala as a base for the Bay of Pigs invasion to our human rights policies of recent years. The cutoff of U.S. military assistance and sales deepened those feelings of resentment" (60:37). Thus, developing a foreign policy in an area somewhat vital for U.S. concerns is a difficult matter, as the commission notes.

United States policy objectives in the relationship with Guatemala produce dilemmas. It is very much in the interest of the United States to support resistance to Marxist-Leninist insurgency in Guatemala, as elsewhere in Central America. This country must also, however, be deeply concerned about the brutal violations of human rights in Guatemala (60:81).

Fortunately for the United States, 1984 was a year which saw a significant turnaround for democracy in Guatemala, and one that has prompted better relations and reinstated security assistance. Assistant Secretary Motley notes that "It is encouraging that the Guatemalans have moved in these directions almost exclusively on their own. A decent respect for principle should lead to a stronger link between Guatemala and the United States in the future" (38:3).

## Security Assistance

This stronger link is reflected most directly in the FY 87 Congressional Presentation Document for Security Assistance Programs. Unlike El Salvador and Honduras, Guatemala is considered for assistance under the objective to promote regional stability as opposed to deterring and combatting aggression. 40 countries receive assistance in this category, but only one - Jamaica - will receive more assistance than Guatemala. It is worth noting that \$70 million of the \$80 million requested for Guatemala is in the form of the Economic Support Fund. The \$10 million allocated to MAP is also significant in that 1986 was the first year since 1981 that Guatemala received any funds at all under this program. Justification for this renewed assistance follows.

Guatemalans elected a new civilian government in 1985, ending years of military or military-dominated rule. The new government is faced with a Marxist insurgency, serious economic problems, and the need to improve human rights performance. U.S. assistance to Guatemala will bolster the fragile nascent democracy through balance of payments support, will help the Government address the basic socio-economic inequalities which feed the insurgency, and will provide limited counter-insurgency materiel and training support to the Guatemalan military. Adequate levels of U.S. assistance will reinforce the process of economic and human rights reform. Our assistance will also help support a comprehensive adjustment program aimed at resolving structural economic problems (16:46).

Table IX shows exactly what the U.S. means by adequate

TABLE IX

U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA 1980-1987

<u>Year</u>	<u>Foreign Military Sales</u>	<u>Commercial Sales</u>
1980	10,000	417,000
1981	4,000	7,000
1982	0	750,000
1983	75,000	100,000
1984	3,396,000	37,000
1985	1,785,000	135,000
1986 (est)	10,000,000	50,000
1987 (pro)	15,000,000	50,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>FMS Financing</u>	<u>Economic Support Fund</u>
1980	0	0
1981	0	0
1982	0	0
1983	0	26,350
1984	10,000	30,000
1985	0	12,500
1986 (est)	4,785	47,850
1987 (pro)	0	70,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>IMET</u>	<u>Military Assistance Program</u>
1980	0	71,000
1981	0	0
1982	0	0
1983	200,000	0
1984	250,000	0
1985	455,000	0
1986 (est)	287,000	4,735
1987 (pro)	500,000	10,000,000

All figures in U.S. dollars

Sources: (16:82-87; 17:1-25)

levels of assistance. Except in the case of economic support, the levels of assistance are quite low compared to El Salvador and Honduras. This is especially true in the area of MAP grants, where El Salvador is receiving over 13 times as much and Honduras nearly 9 times more. IMET is on the increase, with the principal objective being to increase professionalism among the Guatemalan military and upgrade English-language programs. The goals of this increased assistance reflect the change in relations over the past two years.

- Promote regional stability
- Encourage political reform and development
- Strengthen the stability of the new democratic government
- Reinforce Guatemala's capacity to respond effectively to guerrilla threats and terrorist activity
- Contribute to the enactment of a comprehensive economic adjustment program
- Foster increased respect for human rights
- Promote a friendly, cooperative bilateral relationship (16:56).

The specific program objectives which will bring about the success of U.S. policy goals are:

- Increase operational capability of helicopter fleet
- Improve civic action capabilities
- Enhance command and control
- Enhance cooperative relationship with Guatemalan military
- Assist new government in responding to the economic and social needs of its people, thereby helping erode the basis of appeal for extremists (16:56).

Since the Army has been in control of Guatemala since 1954 and has relinquished its power only in the last few

years, the question remains as to whether this assistance will be put to good use. The Guatemalan government, by counting orphans of the violence from 1981-84 estimated between 36,000 and 72,000 adults had died as a result of guerrilla army warfare; children remained uncounted (66:11). Since the army partly responsible for those deaths used weapons predominantly of U.S. manufacture (see Table X), can the U.S. be sure renewed assistance will not result in continued atrocities? As late as 1983, Guatemala was seen as an international outcast, "with the worst human rights record in the hemisphere" (66:11).

Perhaps the reasoning for renewed assistance is the "success" of the Guatemalan Army's "four-year master plan" which was to result in an end to leftist subversion and democratic elections. The four major points of this plan were 1) deny subversive access to the population; 2) "rescue" those guerrillas outside normal life; 3) eliminate the enemy's military units; and 4) restructure and re-establish the country's electoral system and constitutional order (66:11). Army Chief of Staff Zamora felt quite confident Guatemala had attained those goals:

We Guatemalans can feel satisfied at being the first country in the world that has managed to inflict a substantial defeat on subversion by means of our own eminently nationalistic strategy and tactics, without outside assistance (66:13).

TABLE X

U.S. ARMS IN GUATEMALA'S ARMED FORCES

## Air Force

11	Cessna A-37B Dragonfly fighter aircraft
6	PC-7 fighter aircraft
3	Cessna T-37C Dragonfly trainer aircraft
unknown	Cessna T-41 Mescalero trainer aircraft
5-8	Lockheed T-33A Shooting Star trainer aircraft
12	McDonnell Douglas C-47 Dakota transports
1	Beech Super King Air 200 communication craft
6	Cessna CE-172 Hawk communication aircraft
3	Cessna CE-180 Skywagon communication aircraft
2	Cessna U-206C Stationair communication craft
9	Bell UH-1D/H Huey helicopters
4	Bell 212 helicopters
6	Bell 412 helicopters
1	Hiller OH-23G helicopter
3	Sikorsky UH-19 helicopters

## Navy

2	Broadsword class coastal patrol craft
2	Utatlan class coastal patrol craft
5	Cutlass class coastal patrol craft
2	Marchete class troop carriers

## Army

6	M-3A1 armored personnel carriers
14	M-8 armored personnel carriers
10	M-113 armored personnel carriers
7	V-150 Commando armored personnel carriers
100	CJ-7 support jeeps
50	M-44A2 2.5-ton support trucks
100s	M-817 5-ton support trucks
10	40mm SP howitzers
12	75mm howitzers
12	M-101 105mm howitzers
unknown	.30 caliber Browning machine guns
10,000	M-16 5.56mm machine guns
unknown	.30 caliber carbine rifles
unknown	3.5in M20 rocket launchers
unknown	60mm M2 and 81mm M1 mortars
unknown	M26 grenades, and various field radios

Source: (51:Guatemala)



## Important Events

Deriving a clear picture of events since 1980 in Guatemala depends on deciphering the views of the all-powerful army, the subversives, the large and discontent Indian populace, and the remaining civilian Ladino population. The conflict is clear in Col Marco Sanchez' statement to the Army's School of Ideological Warfare:

The existence of 23 ethnic groups, with their different languages and dialects, demonstrates that in practice we are not integrated; we lack a national identity. Who better than the Army to be the main bulwark for integrating our national identity? Who better than we men in uniform to project ourselves to every last corner of the Fatherland, bearing the message of nationalism (66:21)?

Evidently, the new president - Vinicio Cerezo Arevelo - thinks there are other ways to achieve national success. When asked what he would do if the Army asked him to sign a written agreement of submission as it did with Montenegro in 1966, he replied:

Maybe they will, but I won't do it. I know the experience of Mendez Montenegro, and I know that he failed because he accepted the Army's conditions. I only believe in a real democratic process, not a masquerade...The worst thing for democratization in Guatemala would be to make a deal and have the Army go on ruling. Then the people would feel defrauded by civilian rule. That's a worse crime than breaking the constitution (66:25).

Does he have any chance of success with those views? The presidency of General Lucas Garcia from 1978-1982 raised political violence in Guatemala to its highest threshold in

30 years. The U.S. government estimated the killings to be at a rate of 70-100 per month in 1981 and 250-300 a month in 1982 (60:79). Increased Cuban support for the now-unified guerrilla groups intensified the struggle, but the government was less well-equipped to fight the rebels since U.S. security assistance was pulled for human rights violations. The 1982 presidential elections were generally viewed as completely fraudulent by most, including the group of army officers that staged a coup within a month after the elections. General Rios Montt lasted only five months and it was General Mejia Victores' unbroken promise of return to constitutional democracy that led to fair elections on 3 November 1985.

On 14 January 1986, Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo was sworn in as Guatemala's first elected civilian president in over 30 years (12:140). It is too early to speculate on his ability to deal with the army, cure Guatemala's social and economic ills, and maintain civilian democracy. Some credit is deserved for General Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores, who, since his coup on 8 August 1983, has worn down leftist opposition in the war-torn "Ixil Triangle" region in northwest Guatemala and made good on his vow, however belated. He left Cerezo with some hope of success and a better world image of Guatemala, as evidenced by renewed U.S. support. It is reported in The Times of the Americas that "Cerezo's biggest problem may be that expectations are

too high....There's a lot of pent-up desire for social, political and economic change in this country" (38:2).

Memories are strong from the early 1980s when political violence swept the country and "anti-communist" army forces terrorized the land. Church and civic leaders are still afraid for their lives and the populace is as yet unwilling to feel at ease. "President Cerezo has said his own highest expectation is to be able to end this kind of terror by curtailing the role of the military and revamping a judicial system known for its inefficiency and corruption. But in these early days of his administration, the fear is still intense" (38:2).

#### Forecasts and Viewpoints

When asked if he thought the United States would back him, President Cerezo replied:

They're neutral, period. Neutral in the sense that they are backing the democratization...I have good friends among the liberals in Congress, and they can lend me a hand. But I hope the U.S. government will pitch in as well. Of course, I know that U.S. aid will have its price. So my request for aid is going to be a modest one. The more aid they give, the greater the conditions. Less aid, more autonomy (66:25).

Less aid is exactly what Guatemala is receiving from the U.S., especially when considering its population is nearly twice that of either El Salvador or Honduras (who receive much more assistance) and the relatively large amount of assistance it received in the past. For this

reason - magnitude - the issue of future U.S. security assistance to Guatemala brings much less controversy than that of its southern neighbors.

Few have argued that renewed U.S. assistance was not deserved in light of the circumstances. The evolution of democracy, the fruition of civilian rule, and governmental attempts to approach the human rights issue have quieted many of Guatemala's critics. The State Department has offended few by approaching the issue of security assistance to Guatemala cautiously.

Maintaining healthy relations and nurturing some degree of influence can only be advantageous to the United States. Guatemala is a regional power by sheer virtue of its size, proximity, and population. In the past, some Central American nations have followed Guatemala's lead in the military and political arena. Now, more than ever, regional stability is a must for the United States - never before has there been such a threat to U.S. influence in this area. Thus, no country can be "lost" as Nicaragua was, to include Guatemala. Security assistance helps secure this posture.

The chances of a communist takeover in Guatemala are slim, considering the extreme hatred Guatemalans have for all forms of communism. However, a resurgence of politically-destructive human rights abuses, or worse, a military coup, loom as conceivable occurrences that could put U.S. security assistance in jeopardy. Continued U.S.

assistance under these circumstances would only be seen once again as serving the corrupt military and helping destroy democracy and freedom. That is precisely why the State Department is cautious and deliberate in rebuilding U.S. influence - the U.S. cannot afford to lose face or another country in Central America.

The future rests with the Guatemalans and their ability to strengthen democracy, improve the economy, incorporate the vast Indian minority into a national identity, and put the military in the proper perspective. While the U.S. has learned its assistance can not alone bring about these occurrences, it would certainly benefit from this type of success in Guatemala.

## VI. U.S. Involvement in Honduras Since 1980

### Objectives and Policy

U.S. policy towards Honduras is similar to that of El Salvador with one major exception: the threat to El Salvador originates internally while the threat to Honduras comes from across its southern border in Sandinist Nicaragua. For that reason, the U.S. has its own military personnel "temporarily" stationed in Honduras and supports a third military party, the "Contras" on the Nicaraguan border. Thus, policy towards Honduras is also policy towards Nicaragua. President Reagan made this very clear in an address to Congress on 14 March, 1986.

Resistance forces fighting against communist tyranny deserve our support...Nowhere is this clearer than in Central America. The Nicaraguan communists have actively sought to subvert their neighbors since the very moment they took power. There can be no regional peace in Central America - or wherever Soviet client regimes have taken power - so long as such aggressive policies face no resistance. Support for resistance forces shows those who threaten the peace that they have no military option and that negotiations represent the only realistic course (29:5).

Resistance forces stationed on Honduran soil result in two major concerns for Hondurans: 1) It places them in direct confrontation with the Sandinist government and armed forces of Nicaragua; and 2) it makes them totally reliant

upon the U.S. for support, since Nicaragua is aided by the U.S.S.R. As this thesis has pointed out, reliance upon the United States is not new for Honduras - it apparently causes little concern among its citizens. However, Hondurans have always sought to avoid regional conflict due to their relatively small population and ill-prepared and equipped armed forces. Harboring resistance forces on their soil makes Honduras uneasy, as did Salvadoran refugees in 1969.

The United States views Honduras from a more regional perspective, or as President Reagan said, a place where this communist "cancer" must be stopped. Ambassador Langhorne A. Motley noted in an address on Western Hemisphere Affairs on 29 January 1985 how this causes Hondurans some anxiety.

Honduras remains the poorest Central American country, but its 1982 transition to democratic government holds true. There is a free press. Trade unions have long been and still are an effective force. Land distribution is relatively equitable. Although still the single strongest institution, the military has never been a praetorian guard for the privileged, nor is it repressive. Presidential elections will be held later this year. Despite all this, Honduras is uncertain about the continuity of the U.S. commitment to help Honduras help itself. This uncertainty partly reflects debates in the United States, but it is tied directly to what has been happening in Nicaragua (38:3).

History would also suggest that this uncertainty can be traced to an inconsistent U.S. level of concern with Honduran affairs, as evidenced by the extremely low level of assistance rendered from 1950 through 1980 (Table V, p. 3-25). This new sense of U.S. concern with the regional

importance of Honduras can be more readily portrayed in the State Department's stated policy towards Honduran relations, as stated in Background Notes:

The United States cooperates with Honduras in efforts toward sustained economic, political, and social development. It encourages the responsible participation of U.S. investment, which can contribute to Honduran development and bilateral trade. The United States also favors stable, peaceful relations between Honduras and its Central American neighbors. For Honduras, under mounting regional political pressures, increased economic needs, and growing security concerns, U.S. material assistance and political support - the most visible manifestation being the conduct of major joint military exercises and significant increases in the levels of bilateral economic aid - have increased in importance (23:6).

Joint military exercises, which have taken place regularly since 1980, are totally supported by the Honduran government. President Jose Azcona Hoyo stated this fact during the closing ceremonies of the "Tosta-86" maneuvers at Palermo military base on 7 April 1986.

This type of exercise undoubtedly contributes to strengthening the process of professionalization of our Armed Forces, increasing their technical capacity and their fighting spirit...It is in this context that my government supports this type of exercise in which troops of a friendly country are also participating...The political situation of the Central American region fully justifies these joint military exercises that are carried out by the Honduran and U.S. armies (50:P10).

Concern for the Nicaraguan threat appears to override all other considerations in Honduras, from many viewpoints. Even the Bipartisan Report, which favors economic improvements, stated that "Honduras will need a greater



sense of security in order to devote its full energies and resources to the tough job of development" (Z1:74). Perhaps the reasoning for this general outlook is Honduras' relatively calm political situation. Another factor could be that the current economic crisis places this poor country in no more an unfavorable position than it has been for a hundred years. Historically, Honduras has never actually initiated a conflict, while neighboring Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua have, at times, tried to directly influence Honduran affairs.

With the absence of Mexican influence, the United States has been the true "big brother" for Honduras, although its support has been sporadic. Combining this atmosphere of relatively peaceful internal conditions, Honduran fear of Nicaragua, and U.S. concern for communist advances, the U.S. is more likely to meet the goals of its foreign policy in Honduras at less cost than in any other country in Central America.

#### Security Assistance

The cost of meeting U.S. policy in Honduras is directly related to security assistance. Only El Salvador receives more U.S. assistance in all of Latin America than does Honduras. Unlike any other Latin American country, Honduras receives additional security assistance both in the form of U.S. military personnel and equipment (as does Panama) and

in the form of aid to the Nicaraguan resistance groups (as does Costa Rica). While the figures for these amounts of assistance are not clear, they are certainly valid and represent, perhaps in sum, the greatest U.S. assistance to any country in the hemisphere.

A key to international efforts to achieve regional peace and to promote democratic national development in Central America, Honduras faces severe political and military pressure from the massive military buildup of Nicaragua's hostile Sandinista regime. U.S. economic and military assistance is a tangible demonstration of our commitment to Honduran national sovereignty and territorial integrity. U.S. support is critical to Honduras' efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, to promote domestic stability and economic recovery, and to modernize its armed forces. It contributes to Honduran confidence -- which is necessary to deter wider regional conflict -- and is vital to our national policy interests in deterring aggression (16:40).

The latter policy reflects the State Department's reasoning for placing Honduras among the nine countries in the world it classifies as receiving security assistance to "deter and combat aggression". It receives the fourth highest amount of assistance among these countries (after Pakistan, El Salvador, and Korea); only nine countries in the world will receive more assistance in 1987: Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Greece, Spain, El Salvador, Korea, and Portugal (16:5). Table XI exhibits just how much U.S. assistance has grown since 1980, making Honduras a very similar recipient to El Salvador. One very similar aspect is the exponential growth of MAP funds which are designed

TABLE XI

U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS 1980-1987

<u>Year</u>	<u>Foreign Military Sales</u>	<u>Commercial Sales</u>
1980	4,906,000	666,000
1981	4,320,000	923,000
1982	9,535,000	500,000
1983	30,209,000	500,000
1984	40,452,000	2,712,000
1985	101,963,000	1,167,000
1986 (est)	90,000,000	2,000,000
1987 (pro)	90,000,000	5,000,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>FMS Financing</u>	<u>Economic Support Fund</u>
1980	3,530,000	0
1981	8,400,000	0
1982	19,000,000	36,800,000
1983	10,000,000	15,000,000
1984	0	142,000,000
1985	0	147,500,000
1986 (est)	0	61,248,000
1987 (pro)	0	90,000,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>IMET</u>	<u>Military Assistance Program</u>
1980	441,000	49,000
1981	535,000	0
1982	1,275,000	11,000,000
1983	800,000	10,000,000
1984	1,000,000	40,000,000
1985	1,104,000	72,800,000
1986 (est)	1,053,000	58,664,000
1987 (pro)	1,300,000	87,500,000

All figures in U.S. dollars

Sources: (16:82-87; 17:1-25)

to "contribute to selective modernization and modest expansion of the Honduran armed forces to provide a minimum deterrent capability, including equipment for a communications battalion, and air defense weapons for infantry units on the Nicaraguan border" (16:62).

The policy goals of U.S. security assistance which are designed to enforce U.S. policy in Honduras are listed below. It is important to note that the first two goals are concerned with the region and not Honduras specifically; another reason for the concern among Hondurans that the U.S. may be more conscious of the Nicaraguan threat than it is with Honduran security.

- Deter Nicaraguan aggression
- Promote regional stability
- Maintain U.S.-Honduran security cooperation
- Strengthen democratic institutions
- Encourage social and economic development

The Program Objectives which enhance Policy Goals are divided among improving security and improving the economy.

- Provide an effective deterrent by strengthening national defense capabilities
- Continue development of coastal patrol and interdiction
- Encourage economic policy adjustments to achieve sustained growth
- Expand economic and social opportunities through vigorous private sector production

In comparison to El Salvador and Guatemala, U.S. goals and objectives appear to be much less concerned with strengthening democracy in Honduras, if order of placement is a valid measurement. The reasoning for this must be 1) Honduras' democracy, although young, is much less threatened

by well-entrenched leftist groups and unbending right-wing extremists and powerful army officers as are El Salvador and Guatemala; 2) the external threat of Nicaragua is much greater for Honduras with its 400 mile border and presence of Contra soldiers; 3) Honduras presents a much better strategic and tactical location to militarily combat Nicaragua than any other country in Central America; and 4) although democracy in Honduras is important, stopping the spread of communism in Central America is much more significant from a regional, hemispheric point of view.

The U.S. appears to be well-equipped and intent on stopping Marxism at the Honduran border. As evidenced by the growing amount of arms in the Honduran forces of U.S. manufacture (Table XII), the U.S. is strengthening Honduran security as never before. Secondly, U.S. military presence is greater now than at any time in Honduras since before World War II. Third, the Reagan administration is prepared to back the Contras until it is no longer justifiable or until Congress refuses to allocate the funds.

The subject of U.S. military presence in Honduras is probably the most controversial issue of all that dominate the recent Central American crisis, although the Contra issue often grabs the headlines. Exactly what is the magnitude of the U.S. strength in Honduras and what does it mean to the area? From the Nicaraguan perspective, the strength is great and likely to cause problems.

TABLE XII

U.S. ARMS IN HONDURAS' ARMED FORCES

Air Force

12	Cessna A-37B Dragonfly counterinsurgency craft
5	Cessna T-41A Mescalero trainer aircraft
3	Lockheed RT-33A Shooting Star reconnaissance
6	Rockwell T-6 Texan trainer aircraft
8	Rockwell T-28 Trojan trainer aircraft
4	Cessna CE-180 Skywagon transport aircraft
14	McDonnell Douglas C-47 transport aircraft
2	McDonnell Douglas C-54 transport aircraft
10	Bell UH-1B helicopters
25	Bell UH-1B/H helicopters
3	Sikorsky UH-19 helicopters
8	Sikorsky S-76 helicopters

Navy

5	Swift 65-ft class patrol craft
2	Swift 105-ft class patrol craft
1	Swift 85-ft class patrol craft.

Army

5	Staghound fighting vehicles
15	M3A1 White armored personnel carriers
10	M24 Chaffee armored personnel carriers
100s	M15LA2 1/4-ton trucks
936	M44A2 trucks
98	M809 trucks
12	M116 75mm pack howitzers
8	M101 105mm towed howitzers
unknown	M198 155mm howitzers
1000	M611 5.56mm machine guns
unknown	M1919A4 .30 caliber machine guns
unknown	M2 HBMG 12.7mm machine guns
unknown	9mm MAC 10 submachine guns
9500	M613 5.56mm rifles
unknown	7.62mm .30-caliber M1 and M14 rifles
1000	41mm M203 grenade launchers
unknown	AN/PRC-77 radio sets and RT341 transmitters

Source: (51:Honduras)

When the United States can place 16,000 men along the Honduran border, this exacerbates the situation. An incident might occur that will provoke this intervention. Therefore, we think that there is a great possibility that intervention will take place. The North American presence in Honduras stimulates the Honduran Army and it also stimulates the counter-revolutionaries (53:52).

From the Honduran military perspective, U.S. support and presence are not only appreciated, but desired. In 1983, General Alvarez (then head of the Honduran Armed Forces) relayed to a National Geographic reporter:

How can we defend ourselves? The United States can say 'That's your problem', but I think there is a moral commitment. Latin America was inspired by the American example of 1776 and the French Revolution. How can it be that you would abandon us and allow those principles to be lost in this hemisphere? (43:629)

The reporter, Mike Edwards, noted that this feeling seemed to pervade throughout Honduran society, a fact not so easily explained. "Rarely in two months in Honduras did I hear anti-U.S. sentiment" (43:622). Some of the reasons cited were fear of communism, as expressed by ex-president Cordova: "If the guerrilla is successful in El Salvador, both Honduras and Guatemala are finished" (43:628). Other reasons cited are the near total dependence on U.S. firms for the maintenance of Honduran economy and the love for several U.S. presidents who have shown interest in Honduras in the past - notably Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and most currently, Ronald Reagan.

Karl Gossman, in his book Nicaragua: America's New

Vietnam?, tries to make the case that the U.S. military wants to provoke action in Honduras and Nicaragua.

Interviewing U.S. Army Colonel Jim Strachen on the subject of Exercise Big Pine II, which involved about 6,000 U.S. military personnel, he quotes Col Strachen: "Certainly there is absolutely no intent that this exercise be provocative in any way, shape or form...there are no combat units here during this exercise" (53:30). Gossman notes that Strachen says there will be about 3,000 marines, 1,000 logistics personnel, 500 members of the 101st Aviation Battalion, 600 construction engineers, plus some Navy seabees and Air Force transportation personnel and makes the comment:

I wondered who were the bigger bullshit specialists? Was it Colonel Sierra, Honduran armed forces spokesman and the very picture of the modern banana republic colonel who simply denies everything, or these guys from my own country stretching points, slickly trying to manipulate the media dominated homefront (53:33).

When he couldn't find anyone opposing U.S. presence, other than Nicaraguans, he quotes an English economist (Ian Cherrett) and an Australian agriculturalist (Douglas Laing), both of whom saw no need whatsoever for the U.S. military in Honduras. Both felt that the economy was the key and that the Reagan administration has made an East-West, superpower struggle out of the situation, one that need not be. During one of the interviews, Laing comments as a U.S. helicopter flies above Tegucigalpa: "You know,...the whole operational budget for agricultural research for this country is



\$215,000 a year. They could finance their whole national program for ten years with the cost of that helicopter" (53:40).

Obviously, there is some disagreement whether the threat is external or internal; the argument follows that the cure is either security assistance or economic support. An added dimension to this problem is the existence of Contra resistance forces in Honduras, one that Honduras denied for several years and does not readily admit today. Recently, there is general agreement that while Nicaragua supports anarchy in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras; the United States supports counter-revolution in Nicaragua.

President Reagan addressed the nation on this subject on 16 March 1986. He acknowledged the legitimacy of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979 which overthrew "a corrupt dictatorship" and promised "free elections and respect for human rights" (25:4). However, he noted that the Sandinistas had "betrayed" the revolution, setting up a totalitarian state backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union.

You see, when the Sandinistas betrayed the revolution, many who fought the old Somoza dictatorship literally took to the hills and,... began fighting the Soviet-bloc communists and their Nicaraguan collaborators. These few have now been joined by thousands. With their blood and their courage, the freedom fighters of Nicaragua have pinned down the Sandinista army and bought the people of Central America precious time...Now comes the crucial test for the Congress of the United States. Will they provide the assistance the freedom fighters need to deal with Russian tanks and gunships, or will they abandon the democratic resistance (25:5).

State Department sources list current resistance forces strength at nearly 20,000. To prove these forces are not prior Somoza troops, as charged by many, the Department published Special Report No. 142 listing the backgrounds and former occupations of senior United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO)/Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) military personnel as follows:

26%	Civilian Professionals or Urban Employees
23%	Civilian Peasants or Small Farmers
15%	Sandinista Soldiers
15%	National Guard Officers
12%	National Guard Soldiers
5%	Sandinista Officers
4%	Civilian Students (27:1)

Thus, total U.S. security assistance to Honduras actually includes \$178,800,000 in direct security assistance funds, maintenance and operation of 1,000 - 6,000 U.S. military personnel, and support of 20,000 resistance forces. Estimation of this total annual cost could very reasonably be said to approach \$400 million, if not more. Actual U.S. security assistance realistically approaches \$800 million; add in assistance to Costa Rica and Guatemala and the figure easily exceeds \$1 billion. In perspective, this means only the Middle East receives more U.S. assistance than does Central America, although a case for the cost of maintaining U.S. presence in NATO and the Far East could be made. Nevertheless, when per-capita assistance is figured (i.e., West Germany has more population than all of Central America combined), Central America certainly ranks as one of the

highest concerns of the Reagan administration, if not the highest security concern.

The question remains: is the investment worth the benefit? Before attempting to answer this question, a synopsis of the events in the 1980s which have prompted the United States to make such an investment in Honduras is necessary.

#### Important Events

For Honduras, three important events mark the early 1980s and signal the shape of things to come. First, in July 1979, Nicaraguan dictator Somoza resigned and was replaced by the Government of National Reconstruction (GLN), also known as the Sandinista movement. Second, guerrilla conflict in El Salvador turned into Civil War as the Sandinista government began assisting the FMLN in 1980. Third, Robert Suazo Cordova replaced General Policarpo Paz Garcia as president of Honduras in January 1981, becoming the first civilian president since 1972 (3:140).

During this time frame, the United States slowly became aware of the growing Central American conflict, and began formulating policy which resulted in increasing influence and participation. Having cut-off security assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua in the late 1970s for human rights abuses, only Costa Rica and Honduras remained on relatively good terms with the United States among

Central American nations. Panama had recently negotiated for control of the Canal Zone and U.S. power to influence Central American affairs seemed to be eroding. The key development which realistically drove the United States to become involved in the area once again was the Soviet and Cuban support of the Sandinista government - a development which gathered momentum in 1979-80. The first step of the United States was to resume assistance to El Salvador in 1981 and begin diplomatic exchanges with Nicaragua.

As the conflict grew in neighboring El Salvador, Honduras proposed a Central American peace plan through the OAS, which suggested a reduction of arms and foreign military advisors, nonintervention, and international verification of commitments (35:38). However, continued aggression on the part of Nicaragua forced Honduras to forsake this attitude and request assistance from the United States - the foothold in Central America the U.S. was looking for. The U.S. immediately sent in Green Beret advisors and held the massive "Big Pine" exercise in February 1983.

An event which centered world attention on Central America in March was Pope Paul II's visit to predominantly Catholic Honduras. His visit to communist Nicaragua later that month was not nearly as well-received, since his speech was "repeatedly interrupted by Sandinistas in the audience" (9:237). In April, President Reagan appointed a Special

Envoy for Central America which resulted in the National Bipartisan Commission. In June, the U.S. established the Regional Military Training Center (RMTC) in Honduras, for the purpose of training Honduran, Salvadoran, Costa Rican, and no doubt, Contra military and security forces (35:36-39).

Political turmoil in Central America reached a peak in the summer of 1983. Attempts at peace were made by the Contadora Group several times, the Sandinistas "six-point plan" on 19 July, and a coalition of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras on 21 July (35:39). None produced any peaceful solution as the U.S. military presence grew in Honduras and on the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, Nicaraguan military strength doubled, the Civil War in El Salvador raged, and guerrilla conflict turned ugly in Guatemala. In October, U.S. forces landed in Grenada and in January, 1984, the Bipartisan Report was released, speculating on future U.S. policy in the region. Also in January, a U.S. helicopter pilot was killed on the Nicaraguan border, fueling charges of the "Vietnam Syndrome" in the United States (10:141). U.S. senators, congressmen and several other sources began charging that the U.S. military buildup in Honduras was much larger than the administration let on and was growing at an alarming rate. In March, the commanders of the Honduran army, security police, and Navy were removed from their posts, border

conflicts with Nicaragua continued, and guerrilla forces within Honduras began causing disturbances (35:38). Trouble within Suazo Cordova's government forced the removal of some cabinet members, but he managed to weather the storm.

Throughout this time frame, the United States continued military exercises with the Honduran forces, and the Soviet bloc continued all-out support of the Sandinistas. The beleaguered Contadora Group proposed agreements on a near-monthly basis, but found support among the key players to be minimal. In July 1984, Honduras experienced a second guerrilla attempt at subversive destruction in the Department of El Paraiso; the effects of Nicaraguan leftist support were being felt in the most peaceful of Central American nations. This activity prompted the Hondurans to temporarily downplay its relationship with the U.S., stopping the training of Salvadorans on its soil and de-emphasizing its military relationship with the U.S. This attitude was short-lived, however, as Honduran military leader Colonel Gonzalez stated in Washington in November 1984 that a "U.S. military base in Honduras would be acceptable" (11:45).

1985 began on a sour note as the U.S. suspended the Contadora-proposed Manzanillo talks in Mexico after 9 sessions and 18 months of negotiation (11:120). Within Honduras, the remainder of the year was characterized by continued border clashes, recognition of some support for

the Contras, and the second election of a civilian president in four years. In January 1986, Jose Azcona Hoya was sworn in as president, and, like his counterparts in El Salvador and Guatemala, faced many challenges. Although the challenge of internal dissent is not as pronounced, it does exist. The economy still makes Honduras the poorest nation in Central America, but land share remains relatively equitable. Racial problems exist only in the Misquito region and can not be compared with the dilemma in Guatemala. The external threat is much nearer, and the border with Nicaragua much larger, but massive U.S. support guarantees some temporary security. Whether this support continues and in what manner are issues to be decided by the Congress, the American people, and future events. Honduras hopes it will continue.

#### Forecasts and Viewpoints

Looking at U.S. security assistance to Honduras is more complex than either El Salvador or Guatemala, because it must be discussed at three distinct levels: 1) security assistance to the country of Honduras; 2) assistance in the form of U.S. military personnel stationed in Honduras; and 3) assistance rendered the "Contra" rebels located in the southern Honduran mountains. Each level is controversial - but none more so than aid to the Contras, which is contested at the highest levels of several governments.

1. Security assistance to Honduras, as an issue in itself, is similar to El Salvador in that the State Department and DOD feel it is necessary and adequate. Also, as in El Salvador, few view it as inappropriate, considering the very real threat posed by communist Nicaragua. As opposed to El Salvador, the argument over the economic/military mix is not nearly as contested, even though Honduras is a much poorer country. The reason for this certainly surrounds the lack of internal dissent within Honduras as opposed to the seemingly unending strife within El Salvador. Once again, the professors at the University of Louisville felt this was a sore point - in their view, great strides towards military power unmatched by equivalent strides towards economic growth spread the seeds of dissatisfaction and eventual turmoil.

Perhaps the biggest problem for Hondurans who examine this issue is the inconsistent U.S. support. In general, Hondurans willingly accept U.S. assistance and seem to appreciate it - but most feel it is only temporary. Early in 1986, the State Department issued a statement concerning the amount of security assistance countries receive as compared to their record of supporting the United States in United Nations proceedings. The statement indicated the U.S. would reconsider assistance to those countries that fail lend their support in the U.N. - for instance, El Salvador and Honduras. These two countries vote only 33%



of the time in favor of the U.S., but receive comparatively massive U.S. assistance. Obviously, the inconsistent U.S. support has had a negative impact, although much can be said about the obligation to vote with the third world nation political bloc.

2. Concerning assistance in the form of U.S. military personnel stationed in Honduras, there are two principal viewpoints: they should be there or they shouldn't. A fairly neutral article in U.S. News & World Report on this topic reported that "what began as a 'temporary' presence in 1982 has begun to look more and more permanent as the Sandinistas entrench themselves and U.S. efforts to unseat them bog down" (65:29). The article centers on the growing U.S. presence and the strengthening of Palmerola Air Base near Tegucigalpa, the port at Puerto Castilla, several radar stations, and the lengthening of several airfields.

Washington's position is that the U.S. must maintain a conspicuous military presence as long as there is a threat from the Sandinistas. It is an open-ended commitment that, says one State Department official, "depends on developments" (65:29).

Karl Grossman's book Nicaragua: America's New Vietnam? and similar publications represent another view: that of American troops bogged down in another foreign war in which the U.S. has no business. In arguing for Contra aid, the Department of Defense has stated that unless assistance is rendered the counterrevolutionaries, it will take billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops to

. . .

dislodge the Sandinistas from power. Of course, this has only fueled the Vietnam syndrome argument. What is not represented in this argument, however, is the underlying U.S. desire to maintain a long-term presence in Central America that this particular crisis presents as an opportunity. It is not likely that U.S. citizens will accept a prolonged war with Nicaragua, and the administration is well aware of that fact.

3. Assistance to the Contra rebels is seen by the administration as an opportunity to avoid such a confrontation, as well as frustrate the Sandinistas. Within this hotly contested issue are three major viewpoints: 1) that Contra aid is necessary to control communist expansion in Central America and avoid U.S. intervention; 2) that Contra aid is futile and results in U.S. support of terrorism; and 3) that the Contadora peace group can settle the issue if only the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would leave the matter to Latin Americans.

Enough has been said in this chapter on why the U.S. feels Contra aid is necessary. The administration, State Department, and Department of Defense strongly support this view, as do many Central American refugee groups. The problems with this view are the rag-tag, disoriented nature of the Contras themselves, and the lingering accusation that the Contras are merely the old Samozá national guard. The administration is trying to dispel those views.

Those arguing that U.S. support of the Contras is futile and represents support of terrorism have a strong voice in the U.S., as evidenced by Congressional resistance to further assistance for the past three years. The main points of the argument are that a mere 15,000 Contra troops stands little chance of defeating a far superior Sandinist army, that the Contras are linked to the late dictator Somoza, and that human rights abuses by the Contras in the field are uncontrollable and make the U.S. look bad. Hurting Contra aid support even more in 1986 is the success of the Contadora group in getting all five Central American nations (minus Panama, which is a charter Contadora member) to the bargaining table for a proposed agreement by the end of the summer.

The Contadora group represents the third view of the Contra issue. Now composed of the four charter nations (Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, and Columbia) and four supporting nations (Brazil, Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay), the Contadora group has become the most important organization in Latin America with the decline of the OAS. Their ability to get all five Central American nations to at least agree to disagree is gaining world support. The bottom line of the Contadora process: remove the superpowers from Central America and let Latin America handle its own problems. The bottom line of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.: it is not that simple.

The biggest problem the Contadora group faces is that it has very little power to enforce its views. Even the combined strength of Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela are no match for either superpower, and the nations of Central America know it. Honduras can little afford to trade its U.S. partners for Contadora ones; while U.S. support has been inconsistent in the past, Latin American support has been nonexistent.

Thus, the issue of U.S. security assistance to Honduras, in whatever form, continues to be controversial, and depending on the view, successful. The future? As quoted earlier, that "depends on developments" (65:29).

## VII. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### Summary

To this point, this thesis has examined U.S. involvement in northern Central America from independence until the present with the goal of accurately and objectively gauging the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy as a specific result of security assistance. In order to achieve this objective, the region was described from a macro viewpoint of several topical areas, highlighting each country's peculiarities, strengths, and weaknesses.

A regional background described the northern half of the Central American isthmus as mountainous, volcanic, tropical (hot and wet), and fairly underdeveloped in some regions, such as Peten and Mosquitia. The importance of climatic variations depending on altitude, poor transportation, and an agricultural economy based on the manipulation of primary products underscored the unique problems these countries face. Culturally, there is a great division among the rich and poor, rural and urban, Ladino and Indian. Poor education and low literacy rates characterize wanting educational systems; Roman Catholicism and the Spanish tongue are predominant throughout. Guatemala has an exceptional race problem with its racially

divided population of Mayan descendants and Ladinos. El Salvador's overpopulation problems, still unchecked, have been the catalyst for war with Honduras and a civil war which lingers. Its refugees fled to every country in the hemisphere; San Francisco alone has a community of some 50,000 Salvadorans. Honduras continues its heritage as the poorest and most illiterate country in Central America; its population growth rate is exceeded by only the poorest countries in the world.

Historically, this area reached its cultural height a thousand years ago in the Golden Age of the Maya. Spanish conquest of Guatemala in 1521 led to 300 years of domination and stagnation. Spanish rule nearly destroyed the Indian race with its encomienda slave system, but forced upon the area its lasting heritage of tongue, religion, and mixture of races. Independence in 1823 by the Federation of Central American States was a short-lived attempt at self-rule, all seven countries of Central America claiming separate independence by 1842. For nearly a hundred years after separate independence, these countries struggled to survive, depending on the Europeans for practically all trade and defense material. The turn of the century witnessed the growth of the fruit trade industry and beginnings of U.S. political influence, commercial dominance, and military support. 100 years of caudillo rule in Honduras was replaced in 1931 by a military dictator, as was the case in

neighboring El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. After the Second World War, the dictatorships were replaced by attempts at democratic government under the guiding hand of the United States. The 1950s were politically turbulent and led to military rule in each country throughout the 1960s. Guerrilla warfare burdened Guatemala for the remainder of the decade, which ended with a war between El Salvador and Honduras. In the 1970s, El Salvador's situation grew progressively worse with massive refugee flight and increasing guerrilla activity. Guatemala struggled with its own guerrilla problem and Honduras existed in relatively peace until events in Nicaragua changed the course of history. The coming to power of the communist-supported Sandinist government in Nicaragua led to a civil war in El Salvador and U.S. troops in Honduras. Guatemala sunk to world pariah status in the early 1980s and then recovered to form a democracy and elect its first civilian president in 20 years.

A discussion of the small, but growing, military establishment in each country completed the regional background. U.S. security assistance has played an important part in modernizing these armed forces at the risk of aiding governments guilty of brutality and corruptness. Newly elected civilian presidents functioning under new constitutions in each country promise to place the military in its proper perspective, but only the test of time will

prove them able.

Foreign involvement in the affairs of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras required a separate chapter due to its significance in describing these countries. Various regions and countries have impacted each country since independence, and continue to do so today. Before independence, Spanish dominance and English commercialism dictated the course of major events in northern Central America. These countries continued to have a great influence, along with France and Germany throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Fear of Mexico and each other (principally Guatemala and Nicaragua) also had an impact on the lack of political, economic, and military growth. The period between 1900 and 1930 was the most diverse era of foreign influence -- one in which prediction of a long-lasting influential power could have suggested either Germany, Chile, the U.S., France, or even Italy. The German-Chilean connection dominated military training, tactics, and support as well as a healthy share of the market. The Second World War broke this connection when each country chose to side with the allies, principally the United States. Since that time, U.S. influence has been paramount. Recently, the U.S.S.R. and Cuba have had a negative, but important, impact. Efforts by the strong regional Latin American countries, headed by the Contadora Group, have exerted a third major influence in northern



Central America. The importance of foreign influence continues today, and is becoming more complex and difficult for the leaders of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Since 1980, events in neighboring Nicaragua have lit the fuse that has been ready to explode in Central America for decades. More world attention has been focused on Central America in the past six years than ever before in history. As was indicated in the foreign influence chapter, the tumultuous decade of the 1980s has been a convergence of interests among the Central Americans, Latin Americans, North Americans, and the Soviet Bloc. It has become a world "hot spot" with the potential to delude into another Middle East.

El Salvador nearly self-destructed in the early 1980s. Aided by Soviet, Cuban, and Nicaraguan communists, the revolutionary forces turned intense guerrilla activity into a protracted civil war. Massive U.S. security assistance began in 1982 and has continued to escalate, maintaining democratic government and supporting a war of attrition with the beleaguered guerrillas. U.S. policy places El Salvador among the most threatened countries it supports, exceeded only by such long-time recipients as Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Pakistan, and Spain. The Reagan administration has made Central America a key focus of its foreign policy -- evidenced by billions of dollars of economic and military support in the past four years. El Salvador is seen as a

success as a result, although many contend President Duarte's power is limited by his military and the U.S.

Guatemala has existed in a relative vacuum in the 1980s when compared to its southern neighbors. Internal strife has been followed by internal remedy. Assistance from the United States was renewed only after promises of democracy and military restraint were fulfilled. General Victores deserves some credit for passing the reigns of leadership to civilian president Cerezo Arevelo, as promised. A relatively large, but ineffective military was kept functioning through the early 1980s by Israeli arms sales, but is improving with U.S. and European support. The two biggest struggles for Guatemala are both internal: racial conflict among the Indians and Ladinos and the ability of the new government to suppress the military. External threats are relatively distant, although no Guatemalan can be easy with the stream of Nicaraguan and Salvadoran refugees who cross their border daily.

Honduras has been dependent on the United States for economic and military support for nearly a century. In the 1980s, U.S. interest in the country has increased due to communist advances and Honduran reliance on U.S. support. A functioning democracy has prevailed for four years after 20 years of military rule and the future looks steady. There are no racial or guerrilla problems to compare with El Salvador or Guatemala, but there is extreme poverty,

illiteracy, and a growing refugee population. In addition, a war is being fought on its southern border among the Sandinista government and Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries. U.S. troops are stationed on Honduran soil and appear to be set for a long stay. Pressures from the United States to overthrow the Sandinist government conflict with Latin American pressures to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. In the final analysis, Honduras has become the most important strategic location for the U.S. in Central America, and figures to remain so for a long period of time.

With the detailed summarization of these countries complete, an analysis of the U.S. security assistance that prompted this thesis remains. The following research questions will discuss the effectiveness of this assistance and determine the worth of future investment.

#### Research Questions and Conclusions

Question One. What are the foreign policy objectives which have governed U.S. security assistance to the region?

There are three major objectives which have determined comprehensive U.S. foreign policy and security assistance to northern Central America: Hemispheric Integrity, Containment of Communism, and Protection of Commercial Interests. These major issues have occurred at various intervals throughout history, as depicted on the following page.

<u>Period</u>	<u>U.S. Policy Objective</u>	<u>U.S. Security Assistance</u>
1823-1900	Hemispheric Integrity	Nonexistent
1900-1931	Protection of Commercial Interests	Military Intervention
1931-1950	Hemispheric Integrity	Support of Dictatorships
1950-1980	Containment of Communism	Limited, Regional Security Asst Programs
1980-1986	Containment of Communsim	Massive, Deterrent Security Asst Programs

Since the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, the United States has guided its foreign policy in Central America around the theme of hemispheric integrity. In the nineteenth century, this meant prompting western hemisphere nations to follow the U.S. lead in international affairs and forsake the desire to turn to Europe. In the twentieth century, it simply meant U.S. dominance of Latin American. For a thirty year period at the beginning of the twentieth century, the growth of the U.S. fruit and railroad industry in Central America led to a foreign policy of commercial protection. Military intervention in Honduras and Nicaragua occurred for the sole purpose of protecting U.S. commercial interests. As the Axis Powers and the French increased their trade and power in Central America, the U.S. concentrated its efforts once again on a policy of hemispheric integrity. By the onset of the Second World War, U.S. pressure was so great that countries were obliged to forsake profitable trade with Germany and Italy.

U.S. security assistance began as a formal program following World War II with the shipment of surplus war materials to countries throughout the world. As the threat of communism spread, U.S. foreign policy in Central America shifted from one of hemispheric integrity to containment of communism. The overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954 and the Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961 were significant events resulting from this policy. Security assistance was minimal, except in Guatemala in the late 1960s. Upon the overthrow of the Somoza government in Nicaragua in 1978 and the rise of the Sandinista revolutionaries, U.S. foreign policy has strictly been one of communist containment. Security assistance since that date has grown significantly and can be termed massive when compared to other Latin American nations and previous assistance to Central America.

The major focus of U.S. foreign policy for a particular era, however, does not necessarily mean abandonment of other policies. Protection of U.S. commercial interests has existed since the turn of the century -- one of the primary reasons Arbenz was overthrown in 1954 was that he nationalized all foreign ownerships, most of which were U.S. Hemispheric integrity will always be a part of U.S. foreign policy, although as countries like Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, and Mexico strengthen, they will no longer look to the U.S. for support or guidance. Today, however, the

foothold on the continent that the Soviet bloc has gained in Nicaragua has created a foreign policy issue for the U.S. that will not shift for some time. The containment of communism will guide U.S. foreign policy and security assistance in Central America indefinitely, until 1) the Sandinista government is overthrown and replaced by a democratic government, which is not likely; 2) the Sandinistas attempt to overtly persuade neighboring countries to accept communism and the U.S. becomes militarily involved, which is conceivable; or 3) the Sandinistas become firmly entrenched in the Latin American Contadora peace process and the U.S. has no alternative but to accept their existence, which is possible. Even in the event that the Sandinist government is accepted by the U.S. as permanent, the containment of communism will dominate U.S. Central American foreign policy for years to come.

Question Two. How effective has U.S. assistance been when measured against foreign policy objectives?

The previous question described the basic objectives of U.S. foreign policy since Central American independence. The answer to this question describes how effective U.S. assistance has been when compared to these objectives, which, as stated previously, have shifted in emphasis over time. The diagram on the following page serves as a guide for discussion of this question.

<u>Period</u>	<u>U.S. Policy Objective</u>	<u>Effectiveness of U.S. Security Assistance</u>
1823-1900	Hemispheric Integrity	No Security Assistance
1900-1931	Protection of Commercial Interests	Extremely Effective No Losses
1931-1950	Hemispheric Integrity	Extremely Effective Dominance
1950-1980	Containment of Communism	Ineffective Nicaragua, El Salvador
1980-1986	Containment of Communism	Effective Nicaragua Contained Attrition in El Salvador Democratic Trend

The use of security assistance to achieve foreign policy objectives can be traced to 1907 when the U.S. sent marines to Honduras to protect the country and U.S. interests from Nicaraguan aggression. At the same time, construction of the Panama Canal strengthened U.S. commercial and strategic interests in the area, furthering U.S. willingness to use force to protect its vast investments. Considering the increase of U.S. assets in the first 30 years of the century in Central America and the unquestioned use of military force to protect these assets, U.S. security assistance for this period was extremely effective. U.S. policy was consistent and direct; few questioned the right or ability to enforce this policy.

Direct intervention was less common from 1931 through 1950 because it was unnecessary. U.S. support of Generals Ubico (Guatemala, 1931-1944), Martinez (El Salvador, 1931-

1944), and Carias Andino (Honduras, 1932-1949) set the pattern of U.S.-backed Central American dictators, a simple and direct method of implementing foreign policy. Security assistance, as known today, increased in quantity and scope. Instead of sending U.S. Marines to protect U.S. interests and maintain control of the hemisphere, the exportation of military equipment and expertise proved to be a much simpler and equally effective means of protecting U.S. investment.

U.S. policy began to deteriorate in Central America under the theme of containment of communism. After the dictators were replaced with idealistic attempts at democracy and eventual military leadership, U.S. policy became inconsistent. The U.S. had a difficult time deciding what government to support in each country. Except in countries where strong dictators emerged (i.e., Somoza in Nicaragua), U.S. security assistance dwindled to practically nothing. From 1950-1970, El Salvador received a total of \$1,464,000 and Honduras \$1,092,000. Guatemala received \$3,069,000, mostly from 1965-1970 to fight communist-inspired guerrillas. The 1970s were as comparatively barren of assistance and extremely inconsistent. Honduras received \$27,000 in 1972, \$5,232,000 in 1973, and \$706,000 in 1974. El Salvador received \$2,000 in 1971, \$500 in 1972, and \$52,000 in 1974. The result of this on-again, off-again support was an inability to influence and help contain civil strife in El Salvador and Guatemala. The support of the



Somoza dictatorship and the reluctance to read the signs of change (as the U.S. successfully did with Marcos in the Philippines) was the worst disaster of the period. For these reasons, the use of security assistance to achieve foreign policy objectives from 1950-1980 were ineffective.

Because of the ineffective use of security assistance during this period and especially in the latter half of the 1970s, the Reagan administration was forced to respond with immediate assistance. This assistance has been successful in aiding the Salvadoran government, protecting Honduras from incursion, and promoting democracy in every country in Central America (except, of course, Nicaragua).

Unfortunately, the assistance came before the policy. Aid to the counterrevolutionaries was an ill-conceived move to thwart the immediate growth of communist-supported Nicaragua. A shift by the U.S. to support of the Sandinistas in 1979 could have avoided any requirement for Nicaragua to continue seeking communist support; but the U.S. clung to the Somoza regime, and has paid the price since. Nevertheless, at this stage, the U.S. is committed to driving the Sandinistas from power, and continued assistance to the rest of Central America is required. If continued, foreign policy objectives will be met.

Question Three. What is the future of U.S. influence in the region with continued security assistance?

The answer to this question is relatively simple. When U.S. security assistance has been consistent and driven by solid foreign policy objectives, U.S. influence in Central America has been dominant. When U.S. security assistance has been inconsistent and driven by vague foreign policy objectives, the U.S. has lost its influence in Central America. The loss of influence has resulted in the emergence of two new powers in the area -- the Soviet Bloc and the Contadora Group. For the U.S. to regain this influence, security assistance must be consistent and purposeful. Without military assistance, El Salvador and Honduras will not be able to meet their external threats. Without economic assistance, all three countries could plunge into depression, and the internal threats would explode. The result of each calamity would be the continued loss of U.S. influence in the area.

The rate of security assistance to this region since 1982 has been massive, and under normal circumstances, extreme. As long as the Soviet Bloc continues supporting Nicaragua, however, this rate of assistance must continue. If, under some set of circumstances, Soviet support diminishes or some acceptable solution is reached, the U.S. can not afford to drop its support to the levels that occurred from 1950-1980. For too many years, the U.S.

considered Central America a cheap but loyal and profitable interest. To keep Central America within the U.S. sphere of influence, the price in the future is going to be higher. Consistent, well-conceived security assistance is the price that must be paid.

#### Recommendations

This study took a comprehensive view of U.S. security assistance to the northern Central American region from independence to the present. Events of the past eight years have caused this region to become far more important to overall U.S. foreign policy than it has been for 50 years. There is little doubt it will continue to be important, as the Soviet Union has gained an important foothold in the continental western hemisphere.

Further study should be made on individual countries from a more focused point of research. In the past, a country as small and poor as Honduras would not have merited thesis research. Receiving more assistance than 90% of the countries the U.S. supports and fielding U.S. armed forces makes the study of Honduras far more important a topic. Additionally, as the U.S. leaves Panama, new logistics concerns for the supply, maintenance, and transportation of the U.S. Southern Command will arise. Honduras could well be the host country for this command in the next century. El Salvador will continue to have problems with its

population and refugee dilemma, and Guatemala will always struggle with its large, unproductive Indian minority. What the U.S. should do to assist these countries and maintain U.S. influence deserves further research. Hopefully, this thesis will provide a good basis for additional study of these concerns.

## Appendix A

### The Contadora Group

Created: January 1983

Original Members: Columbia, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela

Supporting Members: Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay

Origin: Named after the Panamanian island Contadora on which the first Central American peace conference was held. Four original members worked together in 1976 on the Panama Canal Treaty and in 1979 on committing the Sandinistas to a mixed economy.

Major Efforts: The Group has been involved in the following major peace attempts in Central America.

September 1984 - Acta Treaty. Rejected by U.S.

October 1984 - Act of Tegucigalpa. Corrected draft of Acta Treaty by Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras. Rejected by Nicaragua.

January 1985 - Manzanillo Talks. U.S. - Nicaraguan Peace talks suspended after 9 meetings in Mexico.

April 1985 - Reagan Peace Plan. Rejected by Nicaragua.

June 1986 - Esquipulas Summit. Meeting of leaders of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua in Guatemala. Plan unsigned.

Principle View: U.S. and U.S.S.R. have no legitimate security interests in Central America.

Source: (59:74-95).

## Appendix B

### The Organization of American States

Created: 1948 at the Ninth Pan American Conference in  
Bogota, Columbia.

Members: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia,  
Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El  
Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico,  
Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, U.S., Uruguay,  
Venezuala.

Other Status: Canada (observer), Cuba (expelled, 1962).

Components: Council of the OAS - the execution of the  
system, composed of ambassadors, located in Washington;  
Advisory Defense Committee - military advisory body,  
composed of senior military officers, located in  
Washington; Pan American Union - the Secretariat or  
international civil service which supports the  
executive and military committees as needed.

Major Efforts: The OAS is well-known throughout the world  
for its efforts, especially the following:

- 1949 - Settled Nicaragua - Costa Rica border dispute
- 1957 - Settled Nicaragua - Honduras border dispute
- 1962 - Expelled Cuba for actively supporting communism
- 1970 - Settled Honduras - El Salvador War

Source: (44:847-848)

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### Vita

Captain Louis Michael Johnson, Jr. was born 17 April 1956 in Louisville, Kentucky. He graduated from DeSales High School in 1974 and attended the University of Louisville, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Geography in May 1978. Upon commission, he was assigned as administration management officer for the 3380th Field Maintenance Squadron, Keesler AFB, Mississippi, until 29 August 1980, when he was assigned as Squadron Section Commander, 26th Supply Squadron, Zweibruecken Air Base, Germany. During this tour, he attended Troy State University Europe and received a Masters of Science Degree in International Relations in May 1983. On 10 June 1983, he was reassigned as Squadron Section Commander, 609th Tactical Control Squadron, Bad Muender Radar Site, Hessisch-Oldendorf Air Station, Germany. While there, he taught World History courses for Troy State University Europe and was selected to attend the School of Systems and Logistics, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, in June 1985.

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This thesis examined U.S. involvement in the northern Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras from independence until 1986 by gauging the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy as a specific result of security assistance.

A background analysis developed a portrayal of the area from a broad perspective and was followed by an in-depth examination of foreign influence in the region. A subjective analysis based on several prominent viewpoints discussed the issue of security assistance in each country.

This effort indicates there have been varying degrees of success when the U.S. has used security assistance to meet its foreign policy objectives in Central America through the years. Inconsistent U.S. assistance in the 1970s led to the requirement for relatively massive aid during the years of the Reagan administration. The need for consistency in foreign policy and security assistance in this vital area of U.S. concern is the conclusion of this thesis.

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